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Civic Journ.

ABSTRACT

A Tale of Two Cities: Do Small-Town Dailies Practice Public Journalism Without Knowing It?

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Scholar-to-Scholar Session
AEJMC Convention
Aug. 9-12, 2000
Phoenix, AZ

Yes, concludes this case study of two small-town North Carolina dailies. But in one case, the variant of public journalism should more accurately be labeled *civic* journalism, because of an institutionalized and professionalized emphasis on the community's civic life and a de-emphasis of its political, life. In the case of the other less-vigorous paper, the civic journalism variant is personalized but not institutionalized or professionalized.

A Tale of Two Cities: Do Small-Town Dailies Practice Public Journalism Without Knowing It?

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A Tale of Two Cities: Do Small-Town Dailies Practice Public Journalism Without Knowing It?

Public journalism, a reform movement in print and broadcast news media, is barely a decade old.[1] But it has generated a mature and robust debate, both within the journalistic profession and among academic researchers.[2] Much of the debate revolves around the issue of detachment, a professional aloofness rooted in norms of objectivity and credibility. Public journalists assert that this traditional detachment has created a "disconnect" between journalists and the communities they cover, with accompanying losses in the political life of those places.[3] Traditional journalists counter that public journalism's willingness to weaken professional norms of detachment puts news media credibility at risk.[4] Public journalism's critics add that such risks are unacceptable to an industry that has seen its audience dwindle in recent decades.[5]

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[1] Merritt, Davis Jr. (1998). *Public Journalism and Public Life: Why Telling the News Is Not Enough*. (2nd edition). Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Merritt writes of an epiphany he experienced following the presidential election of 1988 that prompted his rethinking of traditional journalism. Merritt wasn't the only newspaperman thinking those thoughts at about that time. In a seminal 1989 meeting of his editorial writers, James K. Batten, chief executive officer of Knight Ridder, one of the nation's largest newspaper chains, argued that a newspaper and its community are part of a single system in which neither can succeed without the other. The company has made public journalism its policy throughout its chain of newspapers. Proceedings of the 1989 meeting are available in a Knight Ridder report, "Newspapers, Community and Leadership: A Symposium on Editorial Pages," Key Biscayne, Fla., Nov. 12-14, 1989.

[2] Hoyt, Mike (Sept./Oct. 1995). "Are You Now Or Will You Ever Be a Civic Journalist? As the Theory Moves Into Practice in More and More Newsrooms, the Debate Gets Sharper," *Columbia Journalism Review*, pp. 27-33.

See also: Editorial (January-Februrary 1995). "The Real Public Journalism," *American Journalism Review*, p. 25.

See also: Rosen, Jay (January/February 1996). "On Being Civic-Minded," *Columbia Journalism Review*, p. 5.

[3] Weitzel, Peter (1998). "Does maintaining credibility have to mean disconnecting from community?" American Society of Newspaper Editors.

See also: Page, Benjamin I. (1996). *Who Deliberates? Mass Media in Modern Democracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 88: "[T]he press was out of touch with ordinary Americans -- ... reporters no longer belonged to the working class but were success-oriented professionals, living in Georgetown and Chevy Chase, entertaining senators, playing golf and sending their children to private schools."

See also: Schudson, Michael (1998). *The Good Citizen: A History of American Civic Life*. New York: The Free Press, p. 196. Schudson writes that the idea of detached journalists took root early this century during the Progressive Era, when citizens were expected to be rational evaluators of fact instead of partisans of political rhetoric. Detached journalism fit the new citizenship paradigm.

Much study of public journalism[6] has focused on medium- to large-market daily newspapers that have adopted it. For example, Philip Meyer and Deborah Potter studied public journalism in the 1996 presidential election and examined 20 dailies ranging in circulation from 74,000 to 687,000 with an average size of 252,000.[7]

The Meyer-Potter study provides much insight into public journalism and its potential effects, but it leaves one aspect unaddressed: Newspapers in smaller communities covering local issues have not been closely examined from a public-journalism perspective.[8] The omission is important because it is mostly larger metropolitan daily newspapers that worry about a corrosive disconnect between themselves, their readers and their big, complex and growing communities, with results that risk the economic vitality of the newspaper and the political life of the community.[9]

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[4] Woo, William F. (Fall 1995). "Public Journalism and the Tradition of Detachment," *The Masthead*, pp. 15-20.

[5] Fouhy, Edward M. (Spring 1996). "Civic Journalism: Rebuilding the Foundations of Democracy. *Civic Partners*. Washington, D.C.: Pew Partnership for Civic Change. (available online at http://www.journalism.wisc.edu/cpn/pew_partnership/civic_partners_journalism.html). Fouhy wrote: "Newspaper circulation is sliding at an alarming rate. Of the top 25 newspapers in the country, only one, The Boston *Globe*, did not drop a drop in circulation in the last reporting period."

See also: Morton, John (Spring 1996). "How Big Should Profits Be? Two Times the Fortune 500 Average?", *Nieman Reports*, pp. 9-10. Morton writes that daily newspapers have recorded double-digit declines in circulation and market penetration during the preceding two decades.

See also: Newspaper Association of America (1997). *Facts About Newspapers 1997*. Vienna, Va.: Newspaper Association of America. The volume reports that 78 percent of U.S. adults read a daily newspaper in 1970, 67 percent in 1980, 62 percent in 1990 and 59 percent in 1996.

[6] Meyer, Philip, "If it Works, How Will We Know," in Lambeth, Edmund B.; Meyer, Philip E. and Thorson, Esther (eds.) (1998). *Assessing Public Journalism*. Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, p. 252.

Public journalism is the preferred term in this study, although synonymous terms are found in the literature. Meyer writes that other terms include civic journalism and citizen-based journalism. Such uses sometimes are determined by which organization publishes the research on the subject. The Knight Foundation, for example, prefers the term public journalism; the Pew Trusts prefer the term civic journalism, and the Poynter Institute prefers the term citizen-based journalism. Public journalism seems to be the term most often used in the journalism trade press and in mass-audience publications, such as newspapers.

[7] The Meyer-Potter study was sponsored by the Poynter Institute and used the term citizen-based journalism. See: Philip Meyer and Deborah Potter, "Hidden Value: Polls and Public Journalism," in Paul Lavarakas and Michael Traugott, eds., "Election Polls, the News Media and Democracy." in press, Chatham House, 1999. A summary, "Making a Difference. Covering Campaign '96, a report on the Poynter Election Project," may be found at www.unc.edu/~pmeyer

The solution to the disconnect problem may be found in small towns and in answers to the following questions: Does size make a difference? Are reporters and editors at big-city public-journalism papers reinventing what their small-town counterparts have been practicing all along? Are reporters and editors in smaller markets practicing public journalism and espousing its values without thinking about it?

The questions are important to the study of newspapers' role in efforts to revitalize representative democracy. In his book about public journalism, movement leader Davis "Buzz" Merritt wrote that newspaperman-philosopher Walter Lippmann early this century led many journalists to see themselves as part of an elite, a view that has disconnected them from ordinary citizens.[10] Lippmann's perspective was from the pinnacle of press power in the United States and its largest newspapers as they were reaching peaks of circulation size and global influence. Today, even Merritt's *Wichita Eagle* is in Kansas' largest city and posts a sizable circulation compared to most dailies in North Carolina.

Robert Bellah and other sociologists assert that there are significant differences between big-city and small-town life in contemporary America.[11] But newspaper research at the community level has been comparatively rare in part because archived issues of small daily newspaper are not easy to find. The New York *Times* is a newspaper of record thanks in part to an indexing system that has cataloged more than a century of daily editions and distributed the catalog to libraries around the nation.

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[8] Public journalism should not be confused with community journalism, although the two terms are related in concept and in practice. A key distinction appears to be detachment, and how far along a continuum from complete detachment to complete alignment with community goals a newspaper is willing to go. Community journalism seems more willing to move toward the complete-alignment side of the continuum than public journalism does. Size also seems to be a key factor, with community journalism more prevalent among the smallest newspapers, including weeklies. See: Lauterer, Jock (1995). *Community Journalism: The Personal Approach.* Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press.

[9] Weitzel, op cit.

[10] Merritt, Davis Jr. (1998). *Public Journalism and Public Life: Why Telling the News Is Not Enough.* (2nd edition). Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

See also: Weitzel, op cit.

See also: Page, op cit.

North Carolina newspapers are a different story. North Carolina is a state of small towns. It publishes more daily newspapers than any other Southern state.[12] The North Carolina Press Association numbers 49 daily newspapers among its membership; 42 of them have circulations of less than 35,000.[13] Two of those dailies are the focus of this study.

The Rocky Mount (N.C.) *Telegram* and the Salisbury (N.C.) *Post*, however, are neither archived nor cataloged, except at local public libraries, making these smaller dailies comparatively inaccessible to researchers. But for a study of small town newspapers and how they interact with their communities, these two North Carolina dailies and the communities they serve provide good places to start.

The two dailies were chosen for their circulation size -- between 15,000 and 34,999[14] (the middle of three such N.C. Press Association categories) -- and for their variation on a measure of editorial vigor.[15] The Salisbury *Post* has won more state press association awards -- 43 -- during the 1990s than any other newspaper in its circulation category. The Rocky Mount *Telegram*, on the other hand, has won among the fewest -- two. The *Post* until 1997 was independently owned by a local family for decades. The *Telegram* has been owned by two distant corporate newspaper chains in succession during the decade.[16]

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[11] Bellah, Robert N.; Madsen, Richard, et al. (1996). *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 177.

Bellah writes: "The associational life of the modern metropolis does not generate the kinds of ... social responsibility and practices of commitment to the public good that we saw in the associational life of the . . . township."

[12] Editor & Publisher, (incomplete cite)

[13] The North Carolina Press Association, in communication with the author.

[14] The North Carolina Press Association listed both papers in this daily-circulation category during the 1990s, until 1998, when the Rocky Mount paper slipped below the 15,000 figure. This study therefore limits its focus to the decade prior to that year. A total of 16 newspapers fell into this NCPA circulation category during the decade of the 1990s.

The following review of the relevant literature reflects the debate over public journalism, its philosophical antecedents, its relationship to civic society and its importance to this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Lack of an accepted definition of public journalism has characterized much of the debate over the movement. But a distillation of words and deeds of advocates and practitioners produces a definitional outline that emphasizes a more solicitous approach to citizen perspectives on community problems than traditional journalism generally allows. For example, in their 1998 assessment of the movement, Lambeth, Meyer and Thorson wrote that some of the more ambitious public-journalism efforts have employed such citizen-opinion-sampling techniques as polling, focus groups, public forums and studies of effects, all aimed at identifying top issues on the audience's public agenda.[17]

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[15] Demers, David Pearce (1996). *The Menace of the Corporate Newspaper: Fact or Fiction?* Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press.

Demers also uses the term editorial vigor, but his definition differs from the definition used in this study. Demers employs the term in his survey research on corporate newspapers and whether they are bad for journalism. According the Demers, two characteristics define editorial vigor: first, criticism of mainstream institutions and norms and, second, an organizational structure that permits members of the editorial-page staff to offer such criticism. Interestingly, Demers alludes to newspaper size and detachment in his discussion of vigor. First, Demers writes, corporate newspapers tend to be located in pluralistic communities with diverse opinions and ideas. Second, news workers tend to be immune to pressures from local institutions because news workers tend not to have grown up in the communities their newspapers serve, they tend to work at their newspapers for short periods of time, they tend to be more oriented toward the corporation than to the community for approval, and they are more likely to base their news judgments on professional norms rather than on local public opinion. Finally, Demers does not consider himself an apologist for the corporate form. He also has called for research into the pace of social change and whether it occurs with sufficient speed to keep democratic society strong.

[16] The paper is owned by the Cox Newspapers Inc. group, which bought the paper from the Thomson Newspapers group. The Thomson group is the focus of a recent study that concluded the chain's cost-cutting and profit-taking during the previous decade cut quality to the point of causing lost revenues, a development that set the chain apart from other U.S. newspaper chains. See: Lacy, Stephen and Martin, Hugh J. (Summer 1998). "Profits Up, Circulation Down for Thomson Papers in the '80s," *Newspaper Research Journal*, 19:3, pp. 63-76.

Advocates add that public journalism emphasizes not only revival of deliberative democracy but also rehabilitation of news media. Surveys show that mistrust of media is high. The Pew Center for Civic Journalism, a leading supporter of public-journalism projects, cites surveys in which most Americans fault newspapers for getting in the way of solving problems facing the nation. Newspapers ignore this disconnect with readers at their peril, Pew asserts.[18] Similarly, the Meyer and Potter survey of readers in 20 metropolitan-daily-newspaper markets found 62 percent of respondents said media are "run by a few big interests." [19]

Several authors have traced roots of this evident disconnect between journalists and their readers to the 1920s, during a running, written, philosophical debate between John Dewey, an educator-philosopher, and Walter Lippmann, a journalist-philosopher.[20] Lippmann asserted that modern life was too complex for the average American to understand, and he advocated governance by a technocratic elite whose actions were transmitted to the public by a press practicing a professional code of objectivity. Dewey responded that democracy's promise could only be kept by reviving the power of the public, by strengthening community life, and by informing and educating the public to this purpose.[21] To Lippmann, the press function was dispensable.[22] To Dewey, the press function was vital to this purpose, and to the survival of democratic society.[23]

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[17] Lambeth, Edmund B.; Meyer, Philip E. and Thorson, Esther (eds.) (1998). *Assessing Public Journalism*. Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, pp. 17-18.

[18] Fouhy, op cit

[19] Lambeth, et al., p. 23.

[20] Bybee, Carl (Spring 1999). "Can Democracy Survive in the Post-Factual Age?: A Return to the Lippmann-Dewey Debate About the Politics of News," *Journalism Communication Monographs*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 29-66.

The author suggests that debate may be too strong a word for the exchange of ideas because Lippmann never directly acknowledged Dewey's responses to his theories.

See also: Rosen, Jay. (1986). *The Impossible Press: American Journalism and the Decline of Public Life*. Ph.D. dissertation, New York University.

[21] Bybee, pp. 57-58.

Dewey's ideas later resonated in the 1947 Hutchins Commission, officially the Commission on Freedom of the Press.[24] The panel's report argued that a free press should provide "a truthful, comprehensive account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning"; serve as a "forum for the exchange of comment and criticism"; offer a "representative picture of the constituent groups of society"; present and clarify the "goals and values of society," and provide "full access to the day's intelligence." [25] Implicit in the commission's report was what became known as the social responsibility theory of the press -- that news media must be a means by which an informed citizenry deliberates and governs itself, an idea rooted in Dewey. Public journalism continues in this philosophical lineage, although it is more explicit and active in emphasizing public deliberation, and it is more focused on community issues.

The Hutchins report, issued in the postwar period when the nation and its news media were emerging as preeminent in the world, provided a global perspective.[26] Merrill writes that the libertarian press ideals of the past half century are giving way to changes at home and abroad that elevate social order over individual liberty. Thus, public journalism, which coalesced as the Cold War came to an end in the late 1980s, adopted a more local-oriented, social-order focus as it downplayed aspects of traditional journalistic practice, such as complete detachment and a reflexive adversarial approach, that inhibit building community ties and the productive functioning of democracy.[27]

In the past decade or so, the Lippmann-Dewey debate and the Hutchins Commission report have been revived and recounted by several scholars, including

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[22] Schudson, pp. 213-214.

[23] Bybee, pp. 57-58.

[24] Commission on Freedom of the Press. *A Free and Responsible Press*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1947.

[25] Lambeth, et al., p. 17.

[26] Meyer, p. 253.

[27] Merrill, John C. (1998, October 14). "Social Order Banners Are Being Hoisted: Are We Ready to March?" Talk presented at "Public Journalism: A Critical Forum," the second annual conference at the Center for Mass Communication Research, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S.C., Oct. 11-15, 1998. Transcript in possession of author.

Jay Rosen at New York University,[28] and the debate has been popularized in the press.[29] Dewey and his philosophical heirs among public journalists have redrawn the close links between the ideas of press, democracy and community. All three ideas combine in a concept called social capital, which Lewis Friedland and others have defined as "networks of social trust that communities draw on to solve problems of mutual trust." [30] Robert Putnam emphasizes that newspapers are important links to building social capital in communities.[31]

Other researchers have echoed Putnam's documented declines in civic organizations -- most famously bowling leagues, as described in a widely distributed 1995 article -- as evidence for his conclusion that social capital has been dwindling in U.S. community life.[32] The conclusion has prompted several authors -- the Roper Poll's Everett C. Ladd among them -- to dispute Putnam's conclusion and to argue that U.S. civic life has not diminished, it only has changed to accommodate new socioeconomic circumstances.[33]

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[28] Corrigan, Don (October 1997). "Public Journalism Opponents and Advocates Not Easily Stereotyped," *St. Louis Journalism Review*, Vol. 28 No. 200, p. 12. Corrigan notes that Rosen is regarded among public journalists as the movement's guru and godfather.

[29] Bybee, p. 30.

[30] Friedland, Lewis A.; Sotirovic, Mira and Daily, Katie, "Public Journalism and Social Capital: The Case of Madison, Wisconsin," in Lambeth, Edmund B.; Meyer, Philip E. and Thorson, Esther (eds.) (1998). *Assessing Public Journalism*. Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, p. 193.

[31] Putnam, Robert D. (1995, January). "Bowling alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy*, 6:1, pp. 66-67.

Putnam defines social capital as "features of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit." He describes such social-capital measures as voter participation, civic-group membership and newspaper readership as hallmarks of socially, economically and politically successful communities.

The concept of social capital is related to the concept of the public sphere, a term in current academic discourse that refers to both a public forum independent of government and private associations beyond the home where people come together to discuss public affairs and community issues. See: Schudson, p. 12. Schudson also notes the historical link between the press and the public sphere in colonial America. See: Schudson, p. 32. And he quotes Dewey on the vital importance of close and direct local community intercourse and attachment. See: Schudson, p. 215, 219.

[32] Bellah, Robert N.; Madsen, Richard (1996 May 8). "Individualism and the Crisis of Civic Membership," *Christian Century*, Vol. 113, No. 16, pp. 510-515.

If newspapers are key to social capital, and if public journalism is the press practice by which it is formed and maintained, what effect have public-journalism newspapers had in communities where public journalism has been practiced during the decade or so since public journalism was conceived? Most evidence of public journalism effects is fragmentary, impressionistic or anecdotal.[34] Or nonexistent. In their study of 20 metropolitan newspaper markets, Meyer and Potter found public-journalism content had no measurable effect on audiences.[35] Leading advocates of public journalism have downplayed expectations by asserting that it may be too soon to measure effects.[36]

But is construction of social capital a constant component of public journalism? Or is it only occasional? Occasional, according to Fouhy of the Pew Center. He recommends that civic journalism's organizing principles be applied in "some stories -- not all, but some." [37] This occasional approach has led some critics to observe that it amounts to dabbling in what some journalists say has been for them a full-time preoccupation. Others have cited research suggesting that episodic reporting produces fragmentary understanding of issues among audiences and less accountability among authorities.[38]

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[33] Ladd, Everett Carll (1997). *Silent revolution: The rebirth of American civic life and what it means for all of us.* New York: Free Press.

See also: Schudson, pp. 296-314.

Both authors assert that other forms of civic association have replaced the older forms studied by Putnam. Ladd, for example, wrote that membership in the Sierra Club has replaced membership in Elks Clubs. Putnam responded that such groups as the Sierra Club are "tertiary" associations characterized by a membership of anonymous check-writers, not of "organized reciprocity and civic solidarity."

[34] Eksterowicz, Anthony J. and Roberts, Robert, et al. "Public Journalism and Public Knowledge." *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 3:2 (Spring 1998): 74-96. Online version available at http://www.epnet.com/cgi-bin/epwlu: p. 10.

[35] Meyer, Philip and Potter, Deborah, "Effects of Citizen-based Journalism in the 1996 National Election," National Press Club seminar, Washington, D.C., March 17, 1997. Condensed version available online at http://www.unc.edu/~pmeyer/meyrpot1.htm

[36] Merritt, Davis and Rosen, Jay (1998). "Imagining Public Journalism: An Editor and Scholar Reflect on the Birth of an Idea," in Lambeth, Edmund B.; Meyer, Philip E., and Thorson, Esther (eds.). *Assessing Public Journalism.* Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, p. 43.

[37] Fouhy, op cit.

[38] Cook, Timothy E. (1998). *Governing With the News: The News Media as a Political Institution.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 113.

But what of newspapers in smaller communities that day in and day out practice a form of journalism that adheres to public journalism's community orientation but without attaching the label "public journalism"? And what of newspapers that have been doing so for decades? Might effects be evident in such communities while they have been missing in bigger markets where public journalism is practiced sporadically? Research by Loomis and Meyer suggests that newspaper corporations exhibit considerable variation in community orientation, with similar variation in predispositions toward public journalism, and that there may be a *virtuous* cycle at work in public-journalism newspaper chains, wherein strong communities and strong media build on one another.[39] Further, Weaver and Wilhoit's mid-1980s survey of journalists indicated significant attitudinal and professional differences between big-city journalists and small-town journalists.[40] Similarly, from an audience perspective, sociologists have noted significant differences between big-city and small-town

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[39] Loomis, David and Meyer, Philip (1999). "Opinion Without Polls: Finding a Link Between Corporate Culture and Public Journalism," paper accepted for presentation to the Southern Association for Public Opinion Research, Oct. 7-8, 1999, Raleigh, N.C. This study follows an earlier Meyer study which suggested that some pre-existing factor might explain both a predisposition to do public journalism and desirable effects on the audience and the community. See: Meyer, Philip and Potter, Deborah. "Hidden Value: Polls and Public Journalism," in Paul Lavarakas and Michael Traugott, eds., "Election Polls, the News Media and Democracy." In press, Chatham House, 1999. A summary, "Making a Difference: Covering Campaign '96, a report on the Poynter Election Project," may be found at www.unc.edu/~pmeyer

Large newspaper chains have come to recognize the importance of the link between newspapers and communities. In a seminal 1989 meeting of his editorial writers, James K. Batten, chief executive officer of Knight Ridder, one of the nation's largest newspaper chains, argued that a newspaper and its community are part of a single system in which neither can succeed without the other. "Newspaper readership is unlikely to turn upward as long as a sense of community continues downward," added John Gardner, former Cabinet secretary in the Johnson administration and former head of Common Cause, the citizens lobby, at the same meeting. "I believe their fate is linked. Newspapers have a stake in the sense of community." Proceedings of that meeting are available in a Knight Ridder report, "Newspapers, Community and Leadership: A Symposium on Editorial Pages," Key Biscayne, Fla., Nov. 12-14, 1989.

See also: Demers, p. 249: "Owners and managers of chain newspapers appear to be less involved in the local community and more oriented to their careers and their organizations."

[40] Cook, p. 83. Cook cites Weaver and Wilhoit's *The American Journalist*, tables 5.7 and 8.6. See: Weaver, David H. and Wilhoit, G. Cleveland (1991). *The American Journalist*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press.

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residents in terms of interpersonal and communal associations.[41]

In summary, the relevant literature on public journalism emphasizes themes and practices important to this study:

- Public journalism takes a more solicitous approach to citizens.
- Public journalism seeks to repair an apparent disconnect between newspapers and their audiences.
- Detachment is a key issue in debates between public journalists and traditional journalists.
- Public journalism emphasizes local communities, their public-agenda problems and social capital, including civic involvement, in efforts to solve community problems.

As Lambeth and his co-authors have noted, a decade of public-journalism newspaper projects, whether they work or not, have provided researchers with an analytical framework with which to detect and measure the presence of public journalism in non-election periods, as well as election periods, and to gather qualitative insights into the press practice.[42] Those research goals, combined with a focus on smaller markets, are the purposes of this study.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions posed in this study include:

- Is this study's measure of editorial vigor an indicator of predisposition to public journalism?
- Are reporters and editors at small newspapers practicing public journalism and espousing its values without labeling or thinking about it?
- Does newspaper and community size make a difference to public journalism?

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[41] Hindman, Elizabeth Blanks (Spring 1998). "Community, Democracy and Neighborhood News," *Journal of Communication*, pp. 27-39. p. 29: "Sociologist Louis Wirth ... , echoing Ferdinand Tonnie's concept of gemeinschaft and gesellschaft, suggested that associations of people in cities might be different than those in small towns. Increasing numbers and and population density, he explained, separate people from their personal contacts and sense of community, and form them into impersonal groups and neighborhoods."

[42] Lambeth, et al., p. 9.

METHOD

The focus group is the primary research method employed by this exploratory study of small-town North Carolina newspaper reporters. Editors were interviewed in-depth separately.

In mid-summer 1999 two focus groups were formed, one for each newspaper under study. Participation was determined by purposive sample: The editor at each paper invited three reporters to join the focus group. Each group met in a room at a neutral site, the local public library. Each session lasted about two hours. An audio recording was made of each session, and from each audio tape a transcript was made. Each separate in-depth interview, held in the editor's office immediately following each focus-group session with reporters, also was audiotaped and transcribed.[43] Text analysis of the unstructured data contained in the transcripts included exploring and coding each transcript for ideas, linking common and contrasting themes, and constructing and testing theories about the data. Quotes were extracted to illuminate and exemplify the ideas. Some numerical descriptions also were extracted from the data.[44] Data were supplemented by one-page questionnaires (see Appendix 1, page 50) completed by all participants that asked demographic information about participants' personal, professional and civic lives (selected results, comparisons, see Appendix 2, page 51). Focus-group participants signed standard consent forms required by the university's academic institutional review board. Editors signed forms acknowledging their employees' participation, as required by the institutional review board.

In the reporters' focus groups a discussion "route" was followed in which open-ended questions were asked,[45] while avoiding rigidity along the route,[46] and demographic questionnaires were filled out. The questionnaires asked information about participants' personal, professional and civic lives, such as place of birth, years worked as a journalist, and memberships in community organizations. The discussion route included questions about public-journalism familiarity, the participant's job and its relationship to the community, the participant's role in the community as a citizen, and the newspaper's role in the community as an institution. Similar questionnaires were filled out and discussion routes followed during in-depth interviews with each editor.

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[43] Lengths of combined transcripts of reporters and editors were 43 single-spaced pages for the Salisbury *Post* and 46 pages for The Rocky Mount *Telegram*. Transcripts are in the possession of the author.

[44] Computer coding was considered using a program called NUD*IST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing, Searching and Theorizing) Version 4.0. But this study's comparatively small number of groups (two) and comparatively small number of participants (six) made use of NUD*IST unwieldy and unnecessary on advice of Paul Mihas, a NUD*IST instructor at the Institute for Research in Social Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

For this pilot study, the focus-group method was appropriate. The focus-group form of group interviewing has been most associated with market research, such as corporate efforts to find ways to entice consumers to buy products.[47] But use of focus groups increasingly has been adapted to nonprofit purposes, including academic research.[48] In this study, the method is used to help build theory and to evaluate how and whether to proceed with research on this topic.

Focus groups typically involve from four to 12 participants who are unfamiliar with each other.[49] The discussion usually is moderated by one or two interviewers[50] conducting sessions that last between one and two hours.[51] This study varies from the prescribed methodology by conducting focus groups with three participants who are co-workers. One practical reason for proceeding with groups of participants familiar with one another is the study's focus on small newspapers in small towns. Under such circumstances it would be difficult, possibly prohibitive, to find participants unfamiliar with each other.[52] Another practical reason for proceeding with smaller-than-usual focus groups is the study's need to be conducted within the time constraints of a five-week academic summer session. Since much of the time involved in conducting focus-group research involves transcribing audio tapes, it was advisable in this case to keep participants to a minimal number so as to expedite this pilot study.

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[45] Krueger, Richard A. (1988). *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. Beverly Hills: Sage, pp. 60-61.

[46] Morgan, David L. (1988). *Focus Groups As Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park: Sage, p. 56.

[47] Krueger, p. 9.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., p. 18.

[50] Morgan, pp. 52-53.

[51] Ibid., p. 41.

[52] Krueger, p. 28. The author writes that the size of small communities may not allow researchers to find complete strangers as participants.

Focus-group procedure is not so rigid as to preclude variation from prescribed norms. One focus-group guide, for example, stresses adaptability of the method and suggests that participants who share workplaces should work at the same level of responsibility and should be interviewed at a neutral location.[53] Both recommendations were followed in the current study. Further, the literature on focus-group research provides some justification for conducting sessions with smaller-than-prescribed groups of familiar participants. Krueger, for example, recommends proceeding with focus groups that fail to achieve prescribed attendance.[54] He also notes that smaller groups ("mini-focus groups") are easier to recruit, host and more comfortable for participants.[55]

A variant of the purposive sample was the method by which reporters were selected for focus group participation. The method typically involves a participant being invited to bring a friend to the focus group, which has the advantage of making participants more comfortable.[56] In this study, an editor was invited to recommend reporters for participation in each group. Since the study focuses on the transmission of organizational culture -- professional norms and values held by senior members of the organization and transmitted to new members [57] -- the only criterion editors were asked to apply in their selection of focus group participants was that the group reflect a wide range of experience among reporters, both newcomers and oldtimers. While the method leaves much of the selection process to the discretion of the editor, each editor's prior knowledge of the research topic was limited to its involvement with public journalism. The composition of each group changed when news developments on the day of each interview caused the withdrawal of one member preselected for each group, and a substitute was recruited on the day of each interview session.

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[53] Krueger, p. 165.
[54] Krueger, p. 87.
[55] Ibid, p. 93.
[56] Ibid, p. 95.
[57] Reger, Rhonda K. et al. (July 1994). "Reframing the organization: why implementing total quality Is easier said than done," *Academy of Management Review*, 19: 3, pp. 565-584.

The qualitative character of this methodology is appropriate to the study, which seeks to understand the process of complex personal and professional interactions between reporters, their newspapers and their communities in small North Carolina towns. Quantitative analysis will be appropriate when later research seeks to analyze variance among more newspapers. The current study, on the other hand, seeks meaning in events and people involved in the process under study and the influence of the physical and social context on these events and activities. This study focuses not on the question "how much?" but rather on "how?" or "why?" [58] Such questions involving complex social interactions cannot easily be broken down into discrete variables, as in quantitative research. These interactions must be viewed as part of a series.[59] They must be studied qualitatively.

Many of the conclusions of qualitative research involve some implicit quantitative element, such as a claim that a particular phenomenon is rare, unusual or common. This use of quantitative support for qualitative research has been called "quasi-statistics." [60] This study uses such quasi-statistics, not only extracted from focus-group interviews but also from triangulation, the process of bringing more than one source of data to bear on a point or issue to corroborate, elaborate or illuminate a research question.[61] This study uses several sources of data -- U.S. Census abstracts, for example -- to triangulate points raised in the focus groups to illuminate community characteristics and to make more generalizable the conclusions drawn. The triangulated data are described in text and presented in tables profiling the two communities under study. (See Appendix 4, pages 53-54.)

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[58] Maxwell, Joseph A. (1996). *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach.* Thousand Oaks: Sage, p. 58.

[59] Salomon, Favriel (August-September 1991). "Transcending the Qualitative-Quantitative Debate: The Analytic and Systemic Approaches to Educational Research," *Educational Researcher*, 20:6, p. 16. The author cites John Dewey on this point.

[60] Maxwell, p. 95.

[61] Marshall, Catherine and Rossman, Gretchen B. (1995) (2nd ed.). *Designing Qualitative Research.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, p. 144.

See also: Maxwell, p. 76.

DATA

Data drawn from transcripts of the two focus groups are categorized according to seven abstractions of the participants' observations and ideas. The seven abstract categories are:

- Administrative: concerning organizational management and administration of work-related tasks and duties
- Personal: concerning participants' personal attitudes and beliefs
- Professional: concerning participants' professional norms and practices
- Institutional: concerning the role of the newspaper as community institution
- Cultural: concerning the cultural life of the community in which the newspaper circulates
- Political: concerning the political life of the community in which the newspaper circulates
- Civic: concerning the civic life -- the social sphere between the private home and the political life -- of the community in which the newspaper circulates.[62]

Participants are described numerically throughout the following description, pursuant to the Institutional Review Board-required pledge of confidentiality. Following is a roster of participants from each newspaper:

- Participants One through Three: reporters at The Salisbury *Post*
- Participant Four: editor at The *Post*
- Participants Five through Seven: reporters at The Rocky Mount *Telegram*
- Participant Eight: editor at The *Telegram*.

Selection of data presented below was based on relevance to the subject under study. Remarks not relevant to issues surrounding public journalism, to the civic engagement of the newspaper as a community institution and to the civic engagement of the participants are excluded from this section. It should be noted, however, that the data selected for this section and for the following analysis reflect the vast majority of the comments offered by participants. The primary criterion for exclusion from the following section was redundance -- remarks that repeated or restated comments chosen for inclusion in this section.

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[62] Schudson, Michael (1998). *The Good Citizen: A History of American Civic Life.* New York: The Free Press, p. 12: "A 'public sphere," as current academic discourse uses the term, refers both to the public forum independent of government and to private associations beyond the household where people come together to discuss public affairs." This study uses the term "civic" to describe Schudson's definition, to avoid ambiguity by use of the term "public," particularly in relationship to the political sphere.

Data in the seven categories follow:

Administrative

Size of news staff was asked of each editor. In Rocky Mount, the staff totaled 21, not including two additional staff positions recently approved. In Salisbury, news staff totaled about 30. Both totals included reporters, photographers, editors and clerks.

Turnover was another administrative matter. In Rocky Mount, focus-group members said staff churn was rapid and frequent. Consider the discussion following the question: "Does The *Telegram* have a lot of turnover?"

> Participant Six: Oh, God, yeah.
> Participant Five: Oh, yeah.
> Participant Seven: In some positions, yeah.
> Participant Five: We lost quite a few recently ... I guess it was in March when they lost four, was it?
> Participant Six: Uh huh.
> Participant Seven: Let's see. We've lost one copy editor, finished Saturday night ...
> Participant Five: Two photographers.
> Participant Seven: Two photographers, sports writer, the education writer.
> Participant Six: Legislative writer.
> Participant Seven: Yeah, that was about a year ago. We're getting to lose the county government reporter, he and a copy editor ... . And the exception is people who have worked here for a long time. I've got a business editor, he's from roughly this area, he's actually from very

> western Nash County area, Franklin County ... for the better part of 30 years, actually more than 30 years, about the better part of 30 years.
>
> Participant Six: And so unappreciated.

In Salisbury, turnover among the eight full-time staff reporters also was steady: The editor said:

> Generally, we have had a lot of turnover in the last few years, since the paper changed hands. I think the economy is just bubbling so much that people are more willing to move right now. But generally we hold on to two or three or four usually, the senior reporters who stay become experts in their field.... I would say on average probably compared to a lot of other papers our staff is probably old.

The age of the senior Salisbury reporting staff was said to be unusually advanced. The editor named three reporters, each of whom had been associated with the paper for about 50 years, although one of them recently had died. The editor explained the longevity: "I think that's a reflection of the people who used to own the paper, the Hurley family, who still live here. And the new owners realize kind of what valuable connections those people were for us."

Personal

This category describes participants' observations about their perceived relationships to their communities and their jobs and about how those interconnected relationships affect them personally.

In Rocky Mount Participants Five and Six, for example, said they saw their relationships to their jobs in terms of their personal traits. Participant Six, for example, responded to a discussion point about the newspaper's institutional role in the community in terms of her status as a lifelong member of, and now the reporting staff's sole representative of, the local African-American community:

> [I]t's also made a difference in the community to see that the newspaper had a black writer. I don't know if they perceive me as, you know, some role model or something at the newspaper that really has done something in this many years that a black person was hired. But it has given them a means to bring about their concerns to the newspaper. And for me it has been a personal thing of finding out that the newspaper is interested in what we have to say. And they have allowed me to really get into a lot of areas that would bring in untold stories that I've passed along to some people in other areas at the paper, besides just athletes.

Participant Six's remarks about race were introduced in the earliest minutes of the discussion and were echoed throughout. The remarks' personal and representational meaning were picked up in a variation provided by Participant Five immediately after the remarks by Participant Six. Participant Five is the staff's youngest and most junior member, with a job responsibility seen in terms of "being a young person at the paper to bring a younger viewpoint into the newspaper. Some fresh story ideas that younger people, people younger than me, maybe my age or a little bit older, could relate to, to kind of draw a different audience to a newspaper."

In Salisbury, Participant One also offered a personal motivation. As a grandmother, Participant One expressed a strong interest in children's issues, which was manifest in the paper's recent prize-winning series of stories about local child abuse: "[I]t hit close to home, he said that because I have five children and 10 grandchildren, and I've been involved with children for an awful long time."

Participant Two also said the newspaper offered a position from which a personal interest in community work could be leveraged: "I think the first six months that I was here I probably tried to volunteer for every organization that I came in contact with, because there is a need there."

A different personal issue arose among Rocky Mount staff members, all of whom expressed personal difficulty with pay. Participants Five and Six, for example, said they worked part-time jobs outside the newspaper to supplement their income. Participant Seven said salary at the paper was no more than what was earned as an

Army 1st lieutenant 12 years earlier. Said Participant Five: "[T]here really just isn't enough money down here. I know I'm not going to make a whole lot in journalism, and I don't plan to become rich by it. But I do intend to make a decent living, and it's not here, not here at The *Telegram*. If I left, the reason would be the salary."

No such comments about compensation were offered by participants at the Salisbury paper.

Professional

Professional subcategories are introduced by a phrase in each of five sections, which follow:

Familiarity with public journalism:
This issue was explored in the first substantive question put to each discussion group. Only one of the six reporter-participants indicated familiarity with public journalism as defined and discussed in trade-press and academic literature. Participant Three, in Salisbury, said:

> I've heard people sort of describe public journalism as the paper taking a leading role and deciding what the public is going to do, and what they're going to focus on, things like that. We heard some discussion about a project that was going on about where the paper actually sort of led the way and tried to get the community to, you know, sort of take up the cause that the paper chose. I think you can go a little too far with things like that. I think we've probably got a pretty happy medium, where we might point out some things that we think need to be changed. But I wouldn't say as far as our leading the public to go out and change some things, we wouldn't necessarily do that.

Other participants described public journalism in terms of providing an information service to readers, a traditional view of the press function. In Rocky Mount, Participant Six added that public journalism meant personal and professional involvement in the civic life of the county that Participant Six has covered as a reporter and has called home for 40 years.

Professional involvement with the community.

One way of raising this issue is to ask the reporters the sources of their stories. Participants Five and Seven shared a view that the paper's feature stories, on which they both worked, often drew on remote sources beyond the boundaries of their local community. Participant Five, for example, said: "I try to incorporate things into my articles that are nationally known but that also affect people in our community so they can relate to it."

Asked to elaborate, Participant Five added:

> My Sunday feature yesterday was on how to ask your boss for a raise. So I talked to some people in the area, in Raleigh, and talked to some professors at colleges who study on business management and asked them the way to go about that. You know, it's something that, you know, people everywhere can use that kind of information.
>
> Q: And when you say these are topics of community interest, in addition to having a national peg as well, how do you know the community interest?
>
> Oh, I guess you hear about them on a national level, but sometimes people in small communities may not know as much as there is to know about it. So I try to bring it to the community level.

Participant Six agreed with Participant Five's remarks.

At The Salisbury *Post*, on the other hand, none of the reporters expressed a similar approach to norms of newsgathering. Without exception they indicated a strictly local approach to reporting, drawing on their contacts in the community, including contacts in civic groups of which they were members. Participant Two, for example, contrasted an earlier reporting job, where community involvement was discouraged, with the current job, where community involvement was encouraged: "[T]he only way you can establish good working relationships is to stay in the community, stay involved."

The Salisbury editor separately expressed similar sentiments: "I want my reporters to be real people. I don't want them to be automatons who just work here and just go home at night and do nothing and know no one in the community. I think we're best served by people who know their community, and you can't really know it if you're not getting involved in it."

The big city:

Each of the newspapers is within an hour's drive of a large city -- Raleigh, the state capital, in Rocky Mount's case; Charlotte, the state's largest city, in Salisbury's case -- in which a major metropolitan daily newspaper is published. No specific question raised the issue of the big-city newspaper serving as a role model for the smaller paper, but the subject arose independently in each focus group and in one editor's interview.

Participant Seven, for example, said in response to a question about public journalism:

> [W]e stand in the shadow of The Raleigh *News & Observer*. So we look for things that we can get that will be of interest to our readers before they can. For instance, I had a story several weeks ago about the Carnivore Preservation Trust in Chapel Hill and Pittsboro. And then today, they had a story about them. So, we're a little bit ahead.

In contrast, the editor in Salisbury, in the shadow of The Charlotte *Observer*, had a different approach to the size and influence disparity. The Charlotte paper, for example, conducts reader surveys to help the paper define its public-journalism coverage. The Salisbury editor responded:

> I envy their ability to go out and conduct those kinds of surveys with meaningful numbers. We don't, have never put anything like that in our budget. I think that may be a way to do it. ... I wish we could do something like that. But what we have to try to do instead is just try to get out there and talk to different people, be open to everybody. I have an open door, anybody can come up here and talk to me any time.

The editor added: "[T]o me, the ideal place to work is a paper this size because you can be so close to your community."

Office complaints:

Rare is the newspaper reporting staff that does not complain about editors, owners and other professional matters of daily concern. Although none of the reporters was invited to criticize such matters, all reporters at the Rocky Mount paper volunteered various criticisms, some of which were contradicted -- again, uninvited -- by their editor in a separate interview.

Early in the Rocky Mount discussion, Participant Seven offered, more as a statement of fact than criticism, that "until two and a half years ago, this was owned by another chain ... and not a lot of investment was put into the news side of things. So we can't provide a lot of the more interpretive, more forward-looking, more in-depth sort of reporting that a larger paper would."

Participant Six followed that mild criticism with another involving a local fundraising event:

> Like Relay for Life.You know, it's a big thing. The other newspaper is a sponsor, or whatever. And I feel like my paper should be a sponsor as well. You know, we're a bigger paper, we put out a better product, and I want people to see our name there, not just the, you know, smaller paper. And so, I see us being, that we need to play that role a little bit more than what we have been doing.

Participants Six and Seven swapped more stories about the newspaper's failure to sponsor community events, such as a civic group's haunted house fundraiser during Halloween. Then Participant Five offered a more pointed criticism of the paper's current publisher:

> I don't think he's community-oriented. But I also don't think he's very oriented with the workers in the newspaper. In the eight months I've been here I think he's made three comments to me, and that's it. You know, he just passes by, does his thing, goes back in his office. And, you know, if he's not even interested in, I guess, the lives of the workers, of the employees, you know, there's no way he's going to be interested in the community itself.

In Salisbury, only one reporter expressed what could be called a critical remark. It was aimed at the paper's editorial-page stances:

> But there are people out there who, you know, say, well, that liberal Salisbury *Post* editorial page, and then there's others out there who say, oh, that conservative Salisbury *Post* editorial page. And I guess as long as you get sort of the same number of people saying that then you figure you're OK. You lean too far one way or another, which I don't know that we have, but, you know, I sometimes wonder if we've taken a step back from pushing it either way, and that's why we don't, you know, we haven't pushed either side too much just because we don't want to offend anybody, and we don't want to come out on the wrong side.

Except for that mild policy criticism, no other participant at the Salisbury paper expressed criticism about the paper, its policies, its employees or its managers.

Training, education:

The questionnaire filled out by each participant asked about professional and educational background, including college major and years of schooling. The average years of college were nearly identical for each paper -- 15.75 years for the reporters and the editor at the Salisbury paper, 15.5 years for the reporters and editor at the Rocky Mount paper. Three of the four Salisbury staff members said they had earned college degrees in journalism. Two of the four at the Rocky Mount paper said they had journalism degrees.

The questionnaire also asked for number of years worked as a journalist. The Salisbury staff averaged 20. 5 years, with a range from two years to 48. The Rocky Mount paper averaged 9.5 years, with a range from one year to 19.

Institutional

This discussion sought reporters' views on the role of their newspaper as an institution in the community they served. At the Rocky Mount paper reporters viewed the institutional role in financial terms. For example, they repeatedly raised the issue of *Telegram* sponsorship of community activities. The reporters were critical of what they said was the paper's unwillingness to "fly the flag" by supporting such nonprofit events as the annual Relay for Life, a local fundraiser for health research. Said Participant Six: "I don't like seeing another newspaper represented, and we're not there. Like Relay for Life.You know, it's a big thing. The other newspaper is a sponsor, or whatever. And I feel like my paper should be a sponsor as well."

Participant Six later added: "I think that when there are big things going on that we need to have somebody from our newspaper represented because we are supposed to be a part of the community, just like the town councilman is there or the mayor is there."

Explained Participant Seven: "We changed publishers right about a year ago now. A previous publisher was more community-oriented a lot of times. Our current one is more budget-conscious."

Participant Seven added:

> I think the newsroom should be involved in their community. We take money out of our community in the form of circulation and advertising revenue, and unfortunately with the trend toward chain ownership, that money does not always come back to the community. It goes to distant stockholders. I think it's important ... that we be involved in things such as the sponsoring.

The Rocky Mount reporters' view of the paper's noninvolvement with the Relay for Life event and others was contradicted by the editor, who asserted that the paper did in fact sponsor numerous community events, including the annual relay. Said the editor: "We've been a chief sponsor of the local Relay for Life effort ... to benefit the American Cancer Society."

Reporters at the Rocky Mount paper volunteered that the *Telegram* was known locally by an unflattering nickname -- the "Tell-a-Lie." Asked how the paper got the nickname, Participant Seven said: "That's just what it was before I got here."

Participant Five said the nickname had a history that hurt her work as a reporter on a story involving hospitals: "I've run into that a few times, but mainly with the story at the hospitals because I had talked to people that have lived in the community for a long time and I guess are familiar with the paper for 50 or so years. And they didn't want to talk to me."

In Salisbury, reporters saw their paper's institutional role in a different light, although financial considerations also were apparent. Participant One, for example, viewed the paper's longtime owners (a local family that sold the paper to a South Carolina group two years earlier) as actively and constructively involved in community affairs. Participant One recalled an anecdote in which the former owner surveyed the city's skyline from a downtown rooftop and said: "'It's a piss-ant town, but it's mine.' I think that's exactly the way he felt about it. And he wasn't going to let anything go wrong."

Added Participant Two, a newcomer to the community:

> And they're still doing, although they don't own the paper, that was just their personal philosophy. Um, like I say, the paper where I worked, I mean, they did not get involved with anybody or anything. I was just like, you stay in your own group, even in your personal life. You needed to be sure that you didn't mingle with your sources. It was so weird when I got here, you know what I mean? Because they [the former newspaper] didn't sponsor any outside functions or activities. It was just the paper. You do your job, you talk to who you need to to get that story, and that's it. No socialization.

The Salisbury editor said the newspaper's institutional tradition of community service continued under the new ownership: "I think that's a reflection of the people who used to own the paper, the Hurley family, who still live here. And the new owners realize kind of what valuable connections those people were for us."

Continuity also was reflected in the longevity of staff reporters at the Salisbury paper. Participant Six, for example, had worked for the paper for nearly a half century. Yet the editor mentioned that the reporter was a youngster compared to two other longtime reporters, one of whom recently had died. The editor added that the new owners, again, continued to encourage the tradition of longevity: "[T]he new publisher came and said, the last thing I want to do is weaken this staff."

At the Rocky Mount paper, longevity was not as evident as it was at the Salisbury paper. The average length of service among focus-group participants at the

Rocky Mount paper was 9.5 years, less than half the average length of service for the Salisbury participants. Participant Seven spoke of a Rocky Mount colleague who had served on the paper's staff for more than 30 years, but the longtime staffer was cited as an exception: "[T]he exception is people who have worked here for a long time … It's strange to see people put down roots and stay."

Participant Six added: "We're seeing folks come for a year, no more than two years, and they're gone. They don't even take the time to become part of the community."

Cultural

The word cultural here refers to the newspaper as a community institution and its relationship to a diverse audience, as well as to issues of diversity within the newsroom, as described by participants.

At the Rocky Mount newspaper Participant Six repeatedly emphasized the paper's institutional relationship to the black community, particularly in Edgecombe County, which in comparison to neighboring Nash County received less attention and fewer resources from the paper, according to Participant Six:[63] "You know, people in my county recognize that kind of thing. It's down to the bottom line now … and I know it's about money. But building up your reputation in the community, I think, will help you gain advertising, sales, circulation."

This perceived insensitivity to the black community was apparent in a recent news story about a local police agency's list of the area's top-10 most-wanted suspects, almost all of them African-American, Participant Six said: "I have no problem if they broke the law, you know, it should be in the paper. Well, a lot of outside sources think we targeted African-Americans, and made a point of putting their pictures there. … We're not the greatest thing in the community to a lot of people because of it."

Participant Seven also was critical of the top-10 story, although Participant

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[63] This racial division between the two neighboring counties was an element in the city's recent award as an All-America City and the subject of a news story in the Raleigh *News & Observer*. See: Gearino, G.D. (18 July 1999). "The Dividing Line," *The Raleigh News & Observer*, pp. 1D, 4D.

Seven suggested that the responsibility for the apparent public-relations problem fell to the local policy agency, not the newspaper: "They're wanted for a lot of little misdemeanors, and I don't see why they would be in the top-10 list. They wouldn't make the FBI's top-10 list."

Participant Six was critical of a colleague on the newspaper's staff who was the subject of a meeting between members of the black community and the management and some staff of the newspaper. The meeting, said Participant Six, was arranged by an "African-American group that wanted to meet to find out how they can get more positive things about African-Americans in the paper, and that kind of thing. ... One of the problems they had was this reporter, the way he'd done things. They just didn't like the way he wrote things, that it made them look very bad. That kind of thing. So it's kind of tough winning people over, after they've had that kind of taste in their mouths."

At the Salisbury paper, the editor had a different take on diversity:

> I do fear sometimes that as diverse, as much as I try to get things diverse, basically we're a middle-class white staff. And we could be blind to or missing a lot of what is going on in the community. ... So, there are segments of the population that I'm afraid we're not getting at. But we're aware of that. We're not sitting up here thinking, oh, well, we know everybody. But we try to reach out to them. ... I think, I'm just a little bit paranoid. Don't want to get too complacent about, well, we're pretty in touch with everything.

Discussion of an absent colleague also arose in discussion with both the editor and the staff at the Salisbury paper, as a similar discussion was initiated by Participant Six at the Rocky Mount paper. Although strong differences of opinion were the issue in the Salisbury discussion, none of the Salisbury staff offered a critical word about the absent individual. The differences arose in 1994 during staff debate over a proposed ethics policy, which tentatively included such matters as staff participation in civic groups. The absent staff member, according to the editor, had sought to include pro-life positions on abortion and anti-homosexual provisions on sexual orientation. The ensuing debate threw the staff into turmoil:

> Well, the sticking point was actually that we had a reporter back then who was very militantly pro-life or anti-abortion, however you want to put it. And he wanted to get involved with those groups. And he wanted to be sure the policy would allow him to do whatever he wanted to do with those groups. And we got into such difficult and unpleasant conversations about that that we just set it aside and said, this thing is bogging us down, and we just moved on. And he, to my knowledge he never did get that involved in any local groups. He actually lived in Winston-Salem the whole time he worked here, which is nine years. But talking to him about that -- oh, and he also wanted to, part of the policy was going to state that we don't discriminate on the basis of, you know, race, sex, blah, blah, or sexual preference. And he wanted to debate that sexual preference issue because he felt so strongly about that. And it just got the whole newsroom in turmoil on some very delicate issues, we said, this is not what we're really all about. Everybody has the sense not to accept bribes, payola, and so on, uh, don't report on things that you're heavily involved in, and let's just get back to business.

During the Salisbury focus group meeting, reporters recalled the former colleague without apparent negative sentiment. Participant One, for example, described the former colleague "just a good, objective reporter. ... And we couldn't be anything but happy for him to leave because he's been commuting, and tried for 10 years to have a baby, and they finally had one. And he's got two extra hours a day with that baby, so it's just glorious that he got a job up there. But it's a big loss to us."

Participant Three added: "He was really good at putting things in perspective."

A final cultural element overlaps a professional element cited earlier. The cultural aspect concerns each staff's view of the big city within an hour's drive of each town under study. Two participants at the Rocky Mount paper commented on the opportunities for personal cultural enrichment in town. Participant Five said: "The entertainment that's here is at cultural centers mainly, I would say. There's some plays that go on, things of that sort. But it's not a whole lot going on, I don't think."

Participant Seven added:

> But, you see, if you're a single person, there's not much to do in Rocky Mount. When I interviewed here, there were four theaters, this was

> in December of '96, 11 screens, two of them were second-run houses with two screens each. By the time I came here the next month, they had torn down the two second-run houses. I mean, literally, closing them down. You know, there's not many clubs here, there's, I read a lot, there was only one bookstore, two bookstores, one small chain store and one small community store. ... Not much to do ... in Rocky Mount, unless you have something like long roots or a spouse. And you relocate to this area there's nothing to do. That's why I'm not going to settle ...

In Salisbury, no such remarks were made about cultural enrichment in town. It may be worth noting that the average age of participants in Salisbury -- 43 -- was older than that of Rocky Mount participants -- 35.

Civic

Civic connections between focus-group participants and the communities they covered, civic connections between editors and their communities, and the newspaper's policies concerning their employees and those connections were a key issue in this study, as civic life is a key element of social capital, which in turn is key to public journalism.

At the Rocky Mount paper, civic involvement -- membership in nongovernmental, nonprofit, local, community-oriented organizations -- ranged from heavy to none. The least senior member of the reporting staff in the focus group was involved in no local organizations. Reasons for the noninvolvement were a recent marriage and recent arrival in the community. The reporter added that if civic-group involvement were to become an option, pursuit of a personal interest in athletic interests would be the most likely participation.

Respondent Six, with membership in four community organizations -- not including her church, in which she served as a Sunday school teacher -- was most involved among Rocky Mount focus-group members: "I make sure that I get my work done. But I also make sure that I have a life outside of the office." Respondent Six added that newspaper colleagues regarded her outside activity as extreme: "A lot of my fellow reporters think I'm crazy, because I do have such a full schedule."

Participant Seven cited occasional involvement with one civic group: "Right now I'm not doing a lot."

The editor in Rocky Mount cited membership in three civic groups, not including church, in which the editor served as a deacon.

In Salisbury, focus-group Participant Two, the least senior staff member, reported memberships in two civic groups, a decline from an earlier plunge into civic involvement: "I think the first six months that I was here I probably tried to volunteer for every organization that I came in contact with, because there is a need there."

Participants One and Three reported no active civic-group memberships, although in the former case the current status represented a dramatic drop from an almost total immersion in civic activity, and in the second case the current inactivity represented a lull before re-introduction to civic activity. Participant Three said: "I'm a member of exactly zero sort of community organizations. I'm at a point right now where I have probably been involved less than I have ever have been in my life, as far as outside of work. Three kids under six years old probably has something to do with that ... But I think we really lose out on stuff by not being involved."

Participant One is an unusual case. As the most senior, active full-time member of the paper's reporting staff, Participant One embodied an institutional history of the paper's civic interaction that spanned nearly five decades. Participant One said:

> When I started, there was just no money for anything. And so the publisher paid for four men to belong to four civic clubs, and you were encouraged to belong to everything because then you could cover them. ... And so, and it was good to belong to things. It was good to belong to the Democratic Party, um, because you found out what was going on in the Democratic Party. And now, that's not good. So we were part of everything, the reporters that were up there were part of everything that went on in the community. That part of it was so we could know what was going on.

But in the early 1980s, a new editor initiated a policy change on civic-group memberships that put a stop to Participant One's civic involvement, but not without resistance:

> I went down screaming and yelling. I told my editor 'way back that I was, first, my husband's wife, and then my children's mother, and then a resident of Rowan County and North Carolina, and then a Democrat, and any one of those things came before being an employee of The Salisbury *Post* because I had worked there long enough already. And he couldn't tell me how I was going to live my life. This was a small town in which my children were growing up, and I was going to participate in it. But he talked me into the fact that the world has changed.

In response to a question about the Salisbury newspaper's policy on reporters' civic-group memberships, the editor explained: "We don't have a written policy, and we've struggled with that. ... We drew up this long thing that was real involved, and we never actually, finally inked it because we got hung up on this very issue."

The existing unwritten policy explained the variation is the reporters' memberships and changes in their civic activity over time, the editor said:

> We don't mind if reporters are members of community groups that, you know, like the church, you know, your school PTA, and I don't want to make a list, a definitive list -- it's OK to join this but not OK to join these. We just ask that they not get involved in something that they're going to cover. ... [Y]ears ago when I came here ... if you wanted to be reported on you had to get a member of The *Post* on your board or in your membership or something like that. And we steadily have gotten away from that, because we realize it's not a good idea. It puts people in that uncomfortable position.

The editor restated the civic-memberships policy in broader terms of community interest: "I want my reporters to be real people. I don't want them to be automatons who just work here and just go home at night and do nothing and know no one in the community. I think we're best served by people who know their community, and you can't really know it if you're not getting involved in it."

Asked whether he encouraged his reporters to join civic groups, the editor for the Rocky Mount paper offered a policy similar to that in Salisbury for his reporters' civic memberships: "I guess I take a neutral position on it. I don't discourage it. The only kind of caveat I put, don't let yourself become someone who's being used just simply because you're with the newspaper."

Rocky Mount focus-group participants were asked about the civic involvement of the paper as a community institution. Participant Five responded by describing the newspaper's publisher:

> I don't think he's community-oriented." Participant Seven elaborated: "Our current publisher is a Rotary Club member. I don't think he does anything else." Earlier, Participant Seven said: "We changed publishers right about a year ago now. Our previous publisher was more community-oriented a lot of times. Our current one is more budget-conscious." Later, Participant Seven said: "I think the newsroom should be involved in their community. We take money out of our community in the form of circulation and advertising revenue and unfortunately with the trend toward chain ownership, that money does not always come back to the community. It goes to distant stockholders. I think it's important ... that we be involved in things such as the sponsoring, civic groups, such as being responsive to the Kiwanis. ... We should be reflective more of our community.

Ownership of the Salisbury paper also had changed hands recently. Participant One said the change had not affected the previous owners' community involvement: "This paper has a long tradition of very involved community service."

Participant Three said the new owners had made no major changes in the way the former owners had run the paper: "In general we're doing, you know, basically the same thing we've always been doing, you know back in the Hurley era."

Salisbury participants provided examples of potential risks of civic involvement by members of news staffs. Participant Two recounted an initial flurry of personal community involvement before backing off for professional reasons: "I found myself becoming so close to these organizations that I said, well, I'm not going to write about them. ... It's hard to separate yourself from the community ... I found myself getting sucked in to all these human-service agencies."

The Salisbury editor recounted a case where she sat on a board of a parentteacher association and became involved in a race-related school-board controversy that affected her own schoolchild. The incident created embarrassment for her personally and for the paper. The editor said: "After that, the publisher set out a policy that's not in writing, but now I know it, not to be on the board of any local groups anymore."

Political

The political life of the community and the community's newspaper are critical social-capital links in public journalism. Participants and editors were asked how each paper covers politics, particularly local political activity, which at the time of this study was in preparation for fall municipal elections.

In Salisbury, Participant Two offered a philosophical approach to readers that seemed to capture the paper's approach to political coverage, although the remark was not made in a political context. "Issues that come up … we have to be careful about. I mean, we don't want to offend our readers."

Participant Three echoed that idea in concluding a discussion about coverage of the nonpartisan local election by the paper and its apparent reluctance to alienate political partisans: "We've sort of followed the wave of not getting involved. … I sometimes wonder if we've taken a step back from pushing it either way, and that's why we don't, you know, we haven't pushed either side too much just because we don't want to offend anybody, and we don't want to come out on the wrong side." The same participant expressed disagreement with the philosophy:

> I think we've swung too far on not telling people which one is the bad guy and which one is the good guy. I think we've swung that way for a reason, probably because, you know, newspapers in the past were picking sides, and they probably got caught picking sides for not the right reason. I think we're a little timid now in choosing people. We don't endorse candidates on the editorial page at all anymore, as far as I know. … I think we should always be pushing a little further.

The Salisbury editor seemed to verify that assessment of the paper's approach to coverage of local politics.

> We have discussed what to do to make voters more aware so they'll get out and vote. But we don't know what to do about that. … [W]riting stories about the candidates, that's about as far as we'll go. We don't even endorse. We used to endorse … But they caused a lot of resentment and hard feelings, and difficulties for our reporters. … There are a few people in the community who tell me that we should endorse. It's difficult at election time not to write endorsements, because that's what's going on. That's what people are expressing opinions about. But I've steered away from that.

In Rocky Mount, two of three focus-group members reported little personal interest in politics. Participant Five, for example, said: "Honestly, I'm not all that interested in politics … It's just not an interest of mine. … I wouldn't be a person to talk to if you wanted to talk politics." Participant Seven expressed intense interest in politics but added: "[A]s far as municipal politics, I don't know much because I'm not from here … [B]ut I don't know very much."

Participants Five and Seven both worked in the features department in jobs that did not involve public-affairs reporting.

Participant Six was a different case. Public-affairs reporting was a routine part of Participant Six's position at the paper, which fostered a keen personal interest:

> I'm into politics only because I have to cover it on every level. … And I have an interest as a citizen of what goes on, who's elected, my town councilman, that kind of thing. My town councilman is running for re-election this time. I was hoping somebody was going to compete with him. I'd love to see a woman on the town council, because we don't have one. And when I'm no longer a newspaper person, I will be running for one of those seats.

The paper's institutional interest in politics and the upcoming election by all accounts was underdeveloped. In the Rocky Mount paper's political coverage, said Seven, "we don't go very deep. And we should, and we could. We don't do any sort of opinion sampling in the community on a scientific basis, or any sort of focus groups, or anything else to gauge what voters are interested in and let that drive some of our coverage. But we could, especially now because, since we're a Cox newspaper. Cox, of course, has a full, fully set up team service out of Atlanta. They did a readership survey for us. ... [W]e could easily do an opinion poll for the twin counties or even for this part of North Carolina. Because we're here, Greenville is a Cox paper, and Elizabeth City is a Cox paper. We're the three dailies, and Cox in North Carolina, and we could do that ourselves. But I don't think we will. I think it's part of lack of, tactfully said, it's part of a lack of desire to spend the money, effort, and part lack of foresight to do it. And it would take extra work on the part of editors, who probably don't want to put the effort..."

Participant Seven also was critical of the paper's lack of coverage of state legislative matters. "I think it's a crying shame, a city of 53,000 people literally an hour from Jones Street [the state capitol], that we are not down there on a regular basis."

The Rocky Mount editor expressed interest in invigorating the community's public affairs and the newspaper's role in fostering political participation:

> I think we would do a great service to the community if we would sponsor some kind of political forum in which candidates would have a chance to either answer issues from a moderator or maybe questions from an audience that were sort of filtered by a moderator who'd pose the questions. I think that kind of thing, we're really the only source of news in town. ... And I think for that reason we have more responsibility than ever to try and get just as much as we can on candidates and on political issues, that kind of thing. So, you know, and I think a forum would sort of fit hand-in-hand with that. There is no League of Women Voters here, who takes on that kind of crusade. The Chamber of Commerce has expressed somewhat lukewarm interest in it. I think that if maybe we got the thing rolling and showed some kind of success in the way of audience participation, that kind of thing, that that might be something they might be interested in in the future. But I do feel like that's something we need to stand up and be a leader in.

The editor responded to a question asking him to assess the state of the city's political life. "[F]or a city of 58,000 people, I find it sadly apathetic. The fact that there isn't another candidate running for mayor is kind of a telling example." Asked why the city's political life was "sadly apathetic," the editor responded:

> it's a good question. And it's something that we've asked one way or another in a lot of different areas. I mean, Friday night football draws maybe 200, 250 people, you know, in a stadium that holds, like, 5,000 people. It's just strange. ...[I]it's just odd that way. You know, ... most of my familiarity in newspapers ... is in High Point, which, you know, 72,000 people. But, man, they, oh, City Council races were a war there. You know, every race was contested by at least one person, often more than one person. Same way with the mayor's race. I was editor of the paper in Auburn, Alabama, immediately before I came here. Just vicious stuff. I mean, it was God-awful, it was so bloody, but we loved it. And then to come up here. No one runs for mayor. Hardly no one runs for City Council.

ANALYSIS

Data analysis will proceed through the same categories as the previous section, in sequence.

Administrative

Both newspapers reported steady turnover in newsroom staff. The Rocky Mount paper, however, appeared to have undergone a dramatic surge, with four departures in one month earlier in the year. The Rocky Mount focus-group turnover discussion led to the issue of longevity of employment at the paper, where substantial seniority among reporters and editors was said to be unusual and unappreciated. At the Salisbury paper, by contrast, longevity was encouraged by the editor and publishers, according to the editor, and several newsroom employees had worked five decades or more at the paper. Average length of employment of study participants in Rocky Mount was three years. The average of participants in Salisbury was 18.5 years. (See Appendix 2, page 51.) The following chart illustrates the comparative longevity of study participants at each newspaper.

Substantial difference in total newsroom staffing also was apparent, as the following chart indicates. In Rocky Mount, newsroom staff totaled 23.[64] In Salisbury, staff totaled 30. (See Appendix 2, page 51.)

Although the Rocky Mount paper employs the smaller newsroom staff, the town has the larger 1998 population -- 60,243 versus Salisbury's comparable figure of 34,542.[65] Rocky Mount also has the higher estimated 1998 per-capita income -- $18,073 -- versus Salisbury's comparable figure of $15,735.[66] Both newspapers are the only daily mass-market publications in their respective towns. (See Appendix 4, pages 53-54.)

Personal

Apparent differences between the two newspaper focus groups arose in response to questions about participants' interconnected professional and personal positions in their respective communities. In Rocky Mount, for example, the youngest focus-group participant expressed personal motivations -- a primary interest in domestic stability in a year-old marriage and a secondary interest in athletics, namely, renewing earlier participation in track and field. In Salisbury, the youngest participant -- although unmarried -- became immersed in nonprofit service organizations immediately after arriving in town.

Rocky Mount focus-group participants unanimously expressed dissatisfaction with salaries, and all said they worked part-time jobs outside the newspaper to supplement newspaper income. None of the Salisbury participants expressed such concerns.

Similar variation in inner- and outer-directed behaviors and interests were reflected in other categories. In general, Rocky Mount focus-group participants expressed more inner-directed motives; Salisbury participants appeared to be more outwardly directed. That is, Salisbury participants more often tended to express themselves in terms of the concerns of the community, of others. Rocky Mount participants, on the other hand, more often expressed concerns in terms of themselves as individuals. The terms inner- and outer-directed are offered here as descriptive, not as reflective of the literature.

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[64] The figure includes two new positions recently authorized but not yet filled at the time.
[65] Editor & Publisher Market Guide (1998). p. II-299.
[66] Editor & Publisher Market Guide (1990). pp. IV-79-81; Editor & Publisher Market Guide (1998). p. IV-77-73.

Professional

Familiarity with public journalism, as defined and debated in the literature, was not evident among focus-group participants. Most discussed it in traditional terms of serving the public, although in Salisbury Participant Three discussed public journalism in terms of being closer to readers' interests in a small town, whereas big-city newspapers lacked comparable connections that small-scale communities allowed.

A question about sources for news and feature stories indicated that Rocky Mount focus-group participants tended to look beyond the community for story ideas. Salisbury participants and the editor, on the other hand, indicated a strictly local focus for primary news sources.

Each newspaper's relationship to nearby big-city competitors indicated different perceptions between focus groups. In Rocky Mount, two focus-group participants indicated a willingness to compete with the Raleigh paper -- which is headquartered an hour's drive away, although the Raleigh paper circulates in Rocky Mount -- on the Raleigh paper's terms and turf. In Salisbury, the focus-group participants and the editor tended to view their paper as having a competitive advantage over the larger Charlotte paper by virtue of the Salisbury paper's command of its community.

Educational achievement differed little between the two focus groups. The average years of school among participants in Rocky Mount was 15.5 years. In Salisbury, the average among participants was 15.8. (See Appendix 2, page 51.)

However, as noted earlier, substantial variance was evident in the average number of years of professional experience as a journalist among participants at each paper. Salisbury participants, who averaged 20.5 years of professional experience, had more than double the average professional experience of the Rocky Mount participants, with 9.5 years. (See Appendix 2, page 51.)

Salisbury participants also had substantially greater longevity of employment at their current newspapers, as the chart below shows. The average number of years worked at the Rocky Mount paper by participants was three years. Among Salisbury participants, the figure was 18.5. (See Appendix 2, page 51.)

Institutional

Staff morale appeared to be an issue in Rocky Mount, but not in Salisbury. Focus-group participants were pointedly critical of the Rocky Mount paper's commitment to its community, in terms of sponsorships of community events and the like. The editor in Rocky Mount, however, contradicted the focus-group participants' perceptions, suggesting another troublesome dimension of morale -- interoffice communication between managers and employees. In Salisbury, focus-group complaints were limited to one participant's generally constructive suggestion that the newspaper's editorial positions should be stronger.

Some of the sharpest differences between focus groups arose in references to each paper's ownership and the owners' relationships to their respective communities. In Rocky Mount, focus-group participants perceived publishers as people who came and went through a revolving door, with widely varying commitments to community relationships but consistently parsimonious approach to expenses. In Salisbury, publishers were perceived as keepers of a constructive status quo that maintained a tradition of community service.

If actions can support focus-group participants' words, the locations of each newspaper's office may reinforce the discussions. In Salisbury, The *Post* occupies its own modern building on a busy block close to such downtown community institutions as the courthouse, the city hall and the public library. In Rocky Mount, the newspaper rents space in an office building across a river and three miles distant from the town center, where its former downtown office stands vacant. This observation does not arise from focus-group discussions, although it was discussed in the interview with the Rocky Mount editor, the last of this study's participants to be interviewed, because the researcher got lost in search of the newspaper's office. The difference in each newspaper's proximity to each downtown may suggest a measure of investment -- institutional and financial -- in each community.

Another measure of institutional connection to community may be indicated by proximity of place of birth to place of employment. Presumably, the closer the proximity, the closer the community connection. The questionnaire filled out by participants asked place of birth. The distance between place of birth and place of employment -- the town where the newspaper is published -- was calculated using a North Carolina map and an Internet mapping service. An average distance was calculated for each paper. For Rocky Mount participants, the average distance was 172 miles. For Salisbury participants, the average distance was 121 miles. (See Appendix 2, page 51.)

Cultural

Staff diversity was one of two cultural elements of discussion in the focus groups. Both focus groups included one African-American reporter. Only in the Rocky Mount focus group was the subject of race discussed specifically. In one discussion thread, the subject arose in the context of the African-American reporter as representative of the local black community. In a second thread, the subject arose in terms of a white staff member who had alienated the black community. In the case of the former Salisbury reporter whose views on abortion and homosexuality divided the staff, participants' discussion of the former colleague was respectful.

The second cultural component of the focus groups concerned each newspaper's institutional relationship with the community, which in the Rocky Mount case is described in the preceding paragraph. In Salisbury, this dimension of diversity arose in the editor interview, in which the editor expressed worry that community diversity may not be adequately represented in the paper's news columns by a staff that is predominantly white and middle class.

The final cultural component of the paper, its reporters and their relationships to the community concerns participants' view of the nearby big city. Among Rocky Mount participants, the city of Raleigh was viewed as a source of cultural enrichment. In Salisbury, no similar view of nearby Charlotte was expressed.

Civic

Rocky Mount participants were more likely to report membership in civic groups, but the Salisbury participants reported a longer tradition of community involvement, both in terms of individual commitment and institutional commitment. Editors at each paper expressed similar unwritten policies on reporters' civic-group involvements, but the Salisbury editor couched the policy in more activist terms; the Rocky Mount editor couched the policy in neutral terms.

Further, Rocky Mount focus-group participants expressed critical remarks about the paper's wavering institutional involvement in community civic affairs, although their remarks in some cases were contradicted by their editor. Salisbury participants spoke appreciatively of the paper's sustained tradition of institutional civic involvement.

Salisbury participants also discussed difficulties that civic involvement had visited on them and their paper. But the editor concluded that civic involvement, both personally and institutionally on balance was best for all involved.

Salisbury's greater civic orientation is supported by content analysis of a constructed week of 1997 issues published by both newspapers, which showed that the Salisbury paper contained more than five times the civic-oriented content of the Rocky Mount paper.[67]

Political

Political life, a key element of public journalism that involves deliberation of political issues, was not well supported at either paper. All participants said they were registered voters, but personal interest in local politics was expressed only weakly at both papers. Non-partisanship is an important element of professional norms of balance, fairness and objectivity. But the papers' institutional roles in support of political life in their respective communities received only modest expression of support. Participants at both papers explained a generally unaggressive approach to political issues by expressing a reluctance to offend political partisans.

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[67] Loomis, David O. (Spring 1999). "Back to Mayberry: Searching for the Roots of Civic Journalism in Small North Carolina Towns," paper prepared for political science seminar conducted by Prof. Michael MacKuen, p. 14. See Appendix 3, p. 52.

In word as well as in deed, both papers indicated little willingness to change approaches to municipal election coverage which, in a content analysis of a constructed week of 1997 issues, found almost identical small amounts of political coverage -- 110 paragraphs versus 111 paragraphs.[68] In Rocky Mount, campaign coverage was concentrated in one edition published two days before the election. In Salisbury, the coverage extended over four issues published in several weeks before the election.[69]

CONCLUSION

The two newspapers selected for this study were chosen for their positions at opposite ends on a spectrum of editorial vigor, as measured by number of state-press-association awards given during the current decade. That led to this study's questions about editorial vigor as a reflection of a form of public journalism characterized by personal, professional and institutional closeness to a small town's civic and political spheres.

The study's first research question -- Is editorial vigor an indicator of predisposition to public journalism? -- can be answered yes, with caveats. If predisposition to public journalism means a consistent and pervasive culture of civic engagement from top to bottom within a newspaper organization, then the Salisbury paper fits such criteria. The Rocky Mount newspaper would not fit.

However, the Rocky Mount paper, as represented by its editor, did express a greater interest in political engagement between the newspaper as an institution and the community it serves, with a goal of increasing political deliberation and participation. Those expressions are consistent with core ideals of public journalism. It should be noted, however, that the Rocky Mount editor's expressions had not been put into effect, nor had they been accepted as policies by his superiors. In Salisbury, one focus group participant expressed similar interest in a more vigorous institutional engagement in the community's political life, but that interest was not shared by the newspaper's editor nor was it manifest in the paper's approach to municipal-election coverage.

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[68] See Appendix 3, p. 52.
[69] See Appendix 3, p. 52.

Research suggests that public journalism may be a more costly big-city alternative to a small-town variant exhibited by the Salisbury paper. The Salisbury variant would have to be called civic journalism, because of its emphasis on the community's civic life and de-emphasis of its political, life. The Rocky Mount paper is as yet untested on the civic or the political aspects of its editor's expressed interest in public journalism concepts, including efforts to build social capital in the public arena of municipal election campaigns. It is worth noting that the Rocky Mount newspaper's posture may be an artifact of its previous ownership, the Thomson group, whose cost-cutting and profit-taking during the previous decade cut quality to the point of causing revenue losses, a development that set the company apart from other U.S. newspaper chains.

This study's second research question -- Are reporters and editors at small newspapers practicing public journalism and espousing its values without labeling or thinking about it? -- can be answered in the affirmative, again with caveats. With exceptions at each of the two papers under study here, most study participants appeared to be unaware of the concepts and practices of public journalism. They weren't thinking about public journalism. But at least in Salisbury, the paper, its owners and its staff without exception were concerned with maintaining the vigorous culture of civic and community improvement that they cited as their legacy of the paper's previous owners. This sentiment may have been best captured by the Salisbury editor, who said: "I'm a part of this community, and there are things that I want to see succeed, and there are causes that I believe in." "Detachment" and "disconnect" do not describe such professional sentiments. Further, the sentiment was manifested in content analysis that showed nearly six times the civic-oriented content in the Salisbury paper than in the Rocky Mount paper.[70]

However, as noted above, the Rocky Mount editor did express greater interest in intensifying the paper's involvement in public deliberation of local issues, although that interest had not yet been acted on. The Rocky Mount paper matched the Salisbury paper's modest amount of coverage of local municipal elections.[71]

The study's final research question -- Does newspaper and community size make a difference to public journalism? -- can be answered in the affirmative, at least tentatively, in the views of participants in Salisbury. Reporters and the editor there viewed their paper's comparatively small circulation and their town's comparatively small size as competitive and professional advantages on which the state's biggest newspaper in Charlotte could not capitalize. Participants in Rocky Mount apparently did not share that view.

Size does appear to make a difference to public journalism, although the variant in this study could more properly be labeled civic journalism, because of the evident de-emphasis of political life at both papers and, at least at the Salisbury paper, the greater emphasis on the civic component of community life.

This finding leads to a question for further research: Does a vigorous civic life substitute for political life? That is, does a newspaper's engagement in civic life produce beneficial community effects that in other periods or circumstances that active engagement in political life might have produced? Study of community effects -- creation of social capital -- would be a profitable area for further research, not only involving the papers under study here, but also in comparison with larger papers, including those that practice public journalism in North Carolina.

Finally, this research appears to support a theory that organizational culture can predispose a newspaper to civic and political commitment -- to public journalism -- or it can inhibit such commitments through parsimony.

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[70] Appendix 3, p. 52.
[71] Appendix 3, p. 52.

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APPENDIX 1

PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

Your name ____

Date of birth _______________ Place of birth__________________________

Years worked as a journalist ______________________________________

Years worked as a journalist at The Rocky Mount *Telegram*______________

Do you plan to be working for *The Telegram* three years from now? ______

Years as a resident of Rocky Mount area ___________________________

Years of school (primary through college) ____________________________

College degree ____

College major ____

Are you married? ____

Do you own a home in the Rocky Mount area? _________________________

If so, for how many years have you owned a home here? _______________

Do you have children? _______________ If so, how many?______________

Do/did/will your children attend school in the Rocky Mount area? _________

Are you a member of a church or temple in the Rocky Mount area? _______

Do you attend weekly religious services? ____________________________

If so, how many weeks a year? ____________________________________

Are you registered to vote?____

Are you a member of a civic or other community-oriented group? (Examples: fraternal, church-sponsored, soccer, Little League organizations) ______________

If so, how many such organizations are you a member of? _______________

Please list them (use back of this sheet if needed) _____________________

APPENDIX 2

Average characteristics of study participants at newspapers under study

	Rocky Mount	Salisbury
Age	35.3	43
Years employed at place of employment	3	18.5
Years experience as journalist	9.5	20.5
Years of school	15.5	15.8
Number/civic group memberships	1.8	2.8
Years, homeowner, current place of employment	2	17.8
Mileage, place of birth to place of employment	172	121
Total employment, newsroom staff	23[72]	30

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[72] The figure includes two new positions recently authorized but not yet filled at the time of interview.

APPENDIX 3

Content Analysis[73]

Salisbury *Post*

	# graphs civic content[74]	# graphs pol. content[75]
Sat., 9/27/97	0	0
Fri., 10/3/97	0	0
Thu., 10/9/97	0	0
Wed., 10/15/97	80	31
Tue., 10/21/97	3	40
Mon., 10/27/97	3	23
Sun., 11/2/97	149	16
	====	====
	235	110

Rocky Mount *Telegram*

	# graphs civic content	# graphs pol. content
Sat., 8/30/97	24	0
Fri., 9/5/97	1[76]	0
Thu., 9/11/97	11	0
Wed., 9/17/97	0	0
Tue., 9/23/97	5	0
Mon., 9/29/97	0	0
Sun., 10/5/97	0	111[77]
	====	====
	41	111

---

[73] This campaign 1997 analysis was done for earlier research on the two newspapers under study. See: Loomis, David O. (Spring 1999). "Back to Mayberry: Searching for the Roots of Civic Journalism in Small North Carolina Towns," paper prepared for political science seminar conducted by Prof. Michael MacKuen.

[74] Includes church notes.

[75] Includes an analysis of all pages in each section of the newspaper issues under study.

[76] This item appeared on Page 9A, labeled "Community" and restricted to upcoming "non-profit" events. Most of the events, however, failed to meet the test of civic orientation by being public organizations -- such as the local library or public school system -- or by being organizations oriented toward the personal interests of members, such as the local chapter of the American Association of Retired Persons.

[77] Includes candidates' bio fast-facts boxes adjacent to narrative news story; does not include pullout quotes that duplicate brief snippets of the news story primarily for the purpose of display and space-filler. Does not include political stories about campaigns in neighboring incorporated communities. Does not include reproductions of sample ballots for several communities on Page 3A, opposite election coverage on Page 2A, which was included.

APPENDIX 4

COMMUNITY PROFILES

Rocky Mount

This town of 60,243[78] straddles the border between the North Carolina counties of Nash and Edgecombe on Interstate 95 and an Amtrak rail passenger line, 110 miles south of Richmond, Va., 51 miles east of Raleigh, in the easternmost third of the state. Since the 1990 U.S. Census, the city's population has grown by 23 percent, more than the state's 15.9 percent average population growth during the same period.[79] The town's principal industries include food and drug products, tobacco, textile mills, lumber and wood furniture and is home to N.C. Wesleyan University.[80] Income per capita in 1998 was $18,073, slightly below the state average of $18,528; income per household that year was $33,230, below the state average of $48,691.[81] The *Evening Telegram* is the only daily newspaper published in town. (See Tables 1 and 2, below.)

Salisbury

This Rowan County seat, with a population of 34,542,[82] is 38 miles south of Winston-Salem, 42 miles east of Charlotte, 111 miles west of Raleigh, in the western third of the state, on Interstate 85 and the Amtrak rail line. Since the 1990 Census, the city's population has grown 49.6 percent, well above the state's 15.9 percent average population growth during the same period.[83] Salisbury is an agricultural and industrial center for the state's Piedmont area and is home to Catawba College and Livingston College.[84] Income per capita in 1998 was $15,735, below the state average of $18,528; income per household that year was $26,392, below the state average of $48,691.[85] The *Post* is the only daily newspaper published in town. (See Tables 1 and 2, below.)

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[78] Editor & Publisher Market Guide (1998), p. IV-73. The figure is an estimate calculated by the publication.
[79] Ibid
[80] North Carolina Community Profile (1993). Raleigh: N.C. Department of Commerce.
[81] Editor & Publisher Market Guide (1998), p. IV-73
[82] Editor & Publisher Market Guide (1998), p. IV-73.
[83] Ibid
[84] North Carolina Community Profile (1993). Raleigh: N.C. Department of Commerce.
[85] Editor & Publisher Market Guide (1998), p. IV-73

TABLE 1

1998 population, 1990s population growth
Rocky Mount, Salisbury, statewide

Population

	1990	1998 (est.)	% change
Rocky Mount	48,997	60,243	23
Salisbury	23,087	34,542	49.6
Statewide	6.6 mil	7.7 mil	15.9

TABLE 2

Income per capita
1990, 1998
Rocky Mount, Salisbury, statewide[86]

	1990	1998 (est.)	% change
Rocky Mount	$13,057	$18,073	38.4
Salisbury	$10,473	$15,735	50.2
Statewide	$13,672	$18,528	35.5

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[86] Editor & Publisher Market Guide (1990), pp. IV-79-81; Editor & Publisher Market Guide (1998), p. IV-77-73.

Engaging the Literature:

A Civic Approach

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by

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Engaging the Literature:

A Civic Approach

Abstract

Traditional civic journalism literature reviews are static, laced with separations that divorce issues from one another, divide theorists from researchers, sever academic writing from the popular press, or break publications into categories based on their bindings. These divisions simply don't capture the unique dialogue of civic journalism. A more intriguing concept is a new model, envisioned as clusters of work through which the movement of ideas can be traced as a dialogue among academics, journalists, and other citizens.

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Engaging the Literature:

A Civic Approach

Introduction

The emerging and multifaceted literature on civic journalism presents myriad challenges for academic researchers and media professionals. Because civic journalism is a relatively new concept, just about a decade in development, comprehensive overviews are rare; because it is so varied, it is difficult to envision an approach to such a review that would capture its richness, celebrate its courage and creativity, and acknowledge the wealth of theory and practice as expressed in both the expert knowledge of academics and the practical experience and wisdom of professionals.

To tackle this problem, this paper will first look at the function and forms of literature reviews. Second, it will outline the breadth of theory–across several disciplines–that informs the developing theory and practice of civic journalism. Third, it will propose a way to envision the civic journalism literature that recognizes its unique properties. Next, it will discuss exemplars in each of the proposed areas as well as offer a synthesis of the major works. Finally, it will suggest areas of research and literature that appear to be underrepresented in the body of civic journalism work and conclude by confessing this model's shortcomings.

The purpose and forms of literature reviews

Classic literature reviews summarize and evaluate the literature in a given topic area. Their several purposes include helping the researcher understand what is already known about a subject, what areas have been underexplored, how the overall quality of research should be assessed, and how her proposed research will contribute to the field. Literature reviews can be either exemplary or exhaustive (Rubin, Rubin, & Piele, 1996, p. 262). The former presumes the reader is familiar with the literature (as this one does); the latter assumes that the reader needs a more complete review of previous research findings, methodological issues, and a synthesis of major conclusions (which this one also will provide as appropriate). The literature review, in effect, creates a "common ground of shared understanding" (Booth, Colomb, & Williams, 1995, p. 242) for authors and readers.

Literature reviews have traditionally been structured one of several ways. Rubin, Rubin, & Piele (1996) suggest that researchers use one of the following organizational schemes:

- Topical
- Chronological
- Problem-cause-solution
- General to specific
- Known-to-unknown
- Comparison and contrast
- Specific to general

Alternative approaches

In lieu of a formal literature review, annotated bibliographies can be useful to some readers. Such listings do not provide an overt synthesis of the literature, but the selection of the classification scheme generally provides some hints as to the relative importance or weight given to the categorized works as well as their intended audience. In recent civic journalism works, for example, annotated bibliographies can be found sorted as books vs. articles and reports (Lambeth, 1997); books vs. articles vs. reports (Black, 1997); definitions and critiques vs. related studies vs. social and political theory (Glasser, 1999); and best manifestoes vs. best critical assessments vs. best debates, etc. (Charity, 1996). Two other extensive bibliographies, although they are not annotated, are sorted into books vs. articles vs. reports (AEJMC Mass Comm Bibliographers, 1999) and defining/debating civic journalism vs. evaluating its practices vs. self-evaluation (sorted by state and project) vs. how to do it vs. resources vs. major players (Massey, 1999).

Conceptualizing a literature review for civic journalism

Much of the early civic journalism literature has adopted, out of necessity, a chronological approach to a literature review, detailing the history of early newspaper experiments and the partnership of a professor, Jay Rosen, and an editor, Davis Merritt, Jr., in bringing the idea of civic journalism into the spotlight. Some of the more recent literature reviews have moved a bit further afield, but the basic story tends to be told and retold. As the field matures, literature reviews will undoubtedly move toward the kinds of schemes described above. However, these approaches tend toward linear separations–separations that divorce issues from one another, divide theorists from researchers, sever academic writing from the popular press, or break publications into categories based on their bindings. These kinds of divisions, as useful as they may be in some cases, simply don't capture the unique dialogue of civic journalism. Categories are inescapable, but a more intriguing concept is a new model that can be envisioned as clusters of work, through which the movement of ideas could be traced as a dialogue among academics, journalists, and other citizens.

The scope of civic journalism literature

Before moving further toward a new conceptualization for this literature review, it is appropriate to outline the kinds of literature that could and should be included. Civic journalism, because it rests on the idea that the press and the public are inextricably bound together, necessarily draws from a number of disciplines.

Democratic theory. Theories of democracy are embedded in civic journalism theory. Liberal democracy, representative democracy, elite theory, democracy as discourse–all varieties of democratic theory have a rich perspective to add. For example, Barber (1984) offers two typologies. The first is thin or representative democracy (based on liberal democratic theory), which he further divides into authoritative, juridical, and pluralist theories (p. 139). The second is direct democracy, which comes in two varieties: unitary (unanimous) and strong democracy. Strong democracy, which Barber urges and which is foundational to civic journalism theory, envisions

- citizens who are self-governing;
- citizens who are educated into citizenship rather than thought to be endowed with it at birth;
- politics that is defined as action, as something that citizens do rather than simply contemplate or have done to them;
- political talk as an essential component of the process;
- civic choices that emerge from forethought and deliberation.

At strong democracy's core, Barber argues, are citizens who participate in a process and find a way to incorporate their individual needs into public goods. In sum, Barber says, strong democrats substitute reasonableness for reason; judgment for certain knowledge, preference or opinion; and common will for truth. His theory of strong democracy rests "on the idea of a self-governing community of citizens who are united less by homogeneous interests than by civic education and who are made capable of common purpose and mutual action by virtue of their civic attitudes or their good nature " (p. 117).

Other theories of democracy that inform assessments of civic journalism have been identified by Allen (1995): competitive democracy, pluralist democracy, deliberative democracy, and participatory democracy. Allen explains:

> Competitive democratic theory is an attempt to reconcile democratic theory with the realities of modern life. . . It puts the responsibility to inform and legislate in the hands of a . . . a community of elites. Modern, pluralistic democracy envisions the give and take between numerous groups and organizations in society. . . . In deliberative democracy, the press reserves a powerful, institutional presence in society. However, its goal is not merely informing citizens, but rather finding creative ways to activate them. Citizenship is not seen as replacing institutions or representatives, but providing direction to the decisions that are made by those institutions and representatives. On the other hand, participatory democracy is an attempt to find a way to give citizens more voice in the operation of society's institutions and businesses. The citizen's role is not that of an advisor, as in deliberative democracy, but rather that of an active participant."

Peters (1999) offers yet another theory of democracy, arguing that civic journalism sees democracy as dialogue instigated by the press. Peters contends that overall, the "story of democratic theory is the story of overcoming successive obstacles to democracy's realization" (p. 99), which he identifies as problems of scale, human nature, social structure and credibility (pp. 101-103). Civic journalism is the latest of those attempts.

Theories of the press. Civic journalism also draw from theories of the press. Classic press theory is divided into two stances: authoritarian and liberal democratic. The authoritarian theory finds little application in the United States, but the liberal democratic approach and its two major strands are pertinent. The first, social responsibility theory, argues that "news and entertainment provided by mass media should reflect social standards or norms. Reporters are guardians of the public welfare and should foster political action when needed by publicizing wrong-doing or 'social evils'" (Dykers, 1995). The second is the marketplace of ideas concept wherein "the mass media provide information and entertainment. Anything interesting or important can become news. The media's job is to report what public officials say and to publish information from official documents, but not to question the truth, accuracy or merits of official information" (Dykers, 1995).

Models of press performance. A number of models of press performance also inform civic journalism. For example, Lambeth (1998) describes Charles Anderson's pragmatic liberalism, which identifies four types: trusteeship, critical, entrepreneurial, and meliorative (p. 24). Schudson (1999) outlines three models of how journalism might serve democracy: the advocacy model, the trustee model, and the market model (p. 119).

Ethical theory. Civic journalism appears to challenge long-held ideals of professional ethics. Therefore, the discussions of ethics as framed by enlightenment liberalism (Merrill, 1997) and communitarianism (Christians, 1999) have a bearing on civic journalism theory.

Theories of civic life/community. Because civic journalism's mantra is to "help public life go well," theories of public and civic life as well as community are essential to inform this work. Friedland, Sotirovic, and Daily (1998) suggest that theories of community address groups in relation to each other, groups in conflict, and networks. Putnam (1995) offers theories of social capital. Stein (1972) theorizes community as the effects of basic processes and historical events, especially urbanization, industrialization and bureaucratization, on changing social patterns.

Theories of public opinion. Before social scientific survey methods were introduced, public opinion was generally regarded as opinion produced by a public in a dialogic process; the concept in current use, however, usually means an aggregation of separate opinions. Others divide theories of public opinion into the product of rational vs. irrational citizens (Katz, 1980). Of more currency with public journalists is the concept of public judgment (Yankelovich, 1991).

Theories of media effects. This stream of mass communication theories tries to address the impact of mass media at a number of levels, including individuals, groups, and institutions. Historically, effects research has seemed to concentrate on the mass media's harmful effects, such as inducing imitative violence, encouraging a consumer culture, or enervating political participation. Studies of advertising, propaganda, and election coverage have tried to ascertain the way mass media provoke specific behaviors by changing their content. Civic journalism seeks to make its own changes in public life, and effects theories inform its work as well.

The connections

The scope of the theories cataloged above clearly reveals the broad expanse of literature available to civic journalists and those who study them. Some observers worry that the intertwined threads of such a rich theoretical tapestry have frayed, however, as communication researchers have tried to carve out their own niche in the academic world. As Peters (1989) notes: "In its rise to the status of respectable social research, . . . mass communication research lost the connection between communication, social science and democracy" (p. 212). Complicating matters is that the "meaning of democracy and communication varies historically" (Carey, 1993).

Bybee (1999) and Rosen (1999) have separately approached a model for assessing the literature that contributes to civic journalism theory by suggesting a linear trace. Bybee's literature review moves from the Lippmann-Dewey debate to Carey to Rosen to Fallows, moving from public philosophy back into academia and out again. Rosen (1999) applauds Carey as a good academic translator and begins his linear trace–which he calls a "relay"–with Carey's summary of the Lippmann-Dewey debate, followed by lengthy excerpts from journalists Cole Campbell (p. 38-40), James Fallows (p. 40-41), Merritt (p. 41), and E. J. Dionne, who also has impressive academic credentials: a Ph.D. from Oxford (p. 42). This is the way Rosen traces how the idea of civic journalism has moved out of academia, through the press and into the public. If there has been a loss of scholarly rigor (something he thinks is a good question), he says, it may have been "offset by the greater publicness of the Lippmann to Dewey to Carey to journalism relay" (p. 43).

Modeling a literature review for civic journalism

As noted earlier, divisions and classifications are unavoidable in tackling a large body of literature. This model for a civic journalism literature review, however, relies as much on its visual representation as it does on necessarily limiting categories. To try to capture the idea of civic journalism in its complexity, and to try to show the extent of the interaction among various contributors to its theory and practice, the following seven clusters of literature are suggested: forebears, history, media practice-democracy-public life, translation, assessment, how to/teaching, and interdisciplinary complements and challenges. This model can be envisioned through this (very rough) sketch (figure 1):

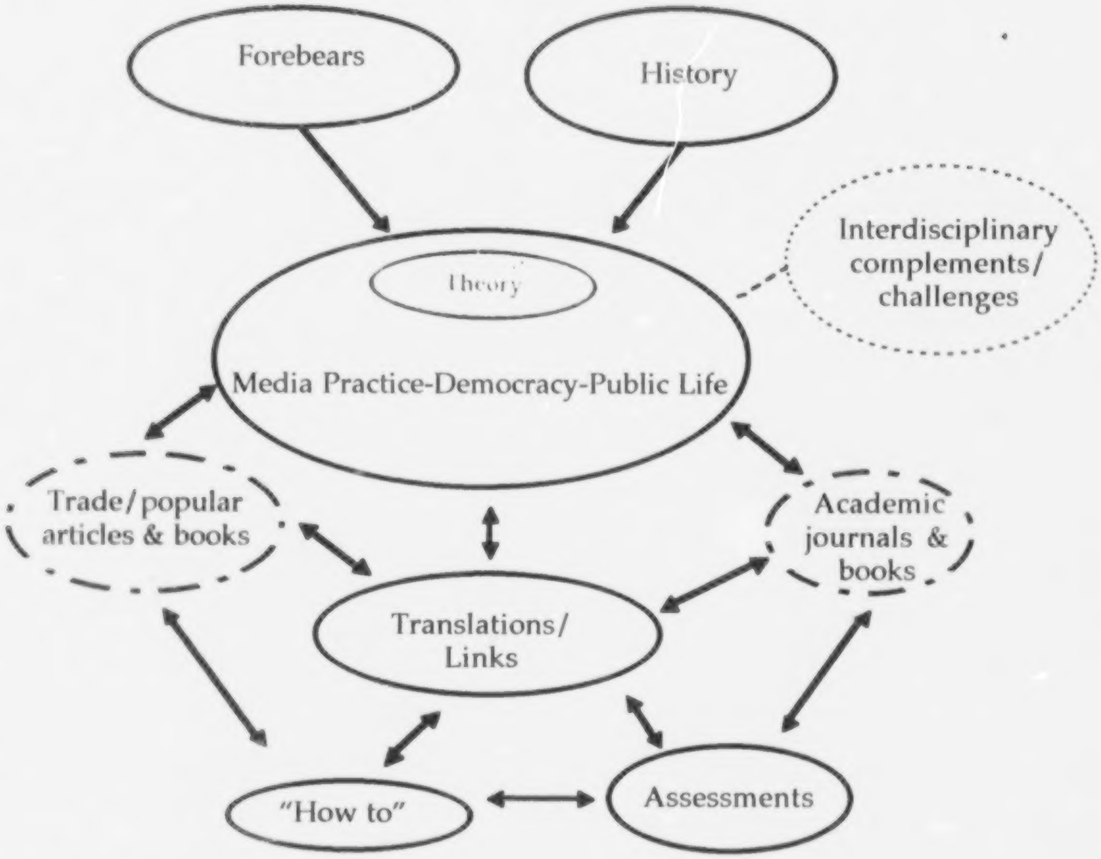
Forebears
History
Interdisciplinary complements/ challenges
Theory
Media Practice-Democracy-Public Life
Trade/popular articles & books
Academic journals & books
Translations/ Links
"How to"
Assessments

Figure 1

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Each of these clusters needs a brief explanation. Civic journalism's forebears span several hundred years (or more if one draws inspiration from Aristotle and Plato), from de Tocqueville (1969) to Dewey (1927) to Lippmann (1922, 1937) to Habermas (1991) to Barber (1984) to Yankelovich (1991)–and centers on democratic theory and philosophy. The history cluster includes the evolving role of the press in the United States as well the social and political history that interacted with the press as they shaped each other, such as Cook (1998), Leonard (1986, 1995), McGerr (1986), Ryan (1997), Schudson (1978), and Thelen (1996).

The media-democracy-public life cluster tries to capture the interdependence of these theoretical approaches and would be filled with a variety of works by Carey, Schudson, Friedland, Putnam, Peters, and Christians, as well as some of Rosen's writings. However, most of Rosen's work fits more properly into the cluster of translators, along with Merritt, Cole Campbell and Charity. The assessment cluster contains empirical work, which as the model shows, can be done by academicians and move either through translation links into trade and popular press articles or go directly into academic publications. A separate category for instructions in how to do or how to teach civic journalism is part of the flow of information and exchange of ideas.

Taken as a whole, this visual representation not only serves as a map of the ways information is shared and informs other clusters of work, but it also models the way it can and should be shared. It could, in fact, serve as an analytical tool to assess the extent of the theory and research loops, the degree to which empirical findings revise theory and the frequency with which theoretical advances produce testable hypotheses. The shaded ellipse within the media-democracy-public life cluster is intended to represent a core of theoretical thought that seems especially resistant to modification by empirical research. The "interdisciplinary complements and challenges" cluster is represented in this model with a light dotted line, indicating that is will require special mention.

This clustered, networked view of the civic journalism literature seems well-suited to the task at hand: summarizing and evaluating the literature.

Examples and synthesis

Rough and preliminary classifications have been made that would surely benefit from refinement and criticism. However, this first pass as a classification scheme has been prepared and attached as appendices. Although approximately 400 books, articles, reports, and websites received at least a quick glance, only about half of the material warranted and/or received a close enough examination to be included at this time.

Forebears. In this cluster, Dewey's 1927 book, The Public and its Problems, stands out as central to civic journalism theory. Dewey's theory of the public, the press, and the state–as well as democracy–has been accepted by most public journalists as their starting point. Dewey argued that the public "consists of all those who are affected by the indirect consequences of transactions to such an extent that it is deemed necessary to have those consequences systematically cared for. Officials are those who look out for and take care of the interests thus affected" (p. 16). Probably the most oft-quoted portion of Dewey's writing is this: "The essential need, in others words, is the improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion and persuasion. That is *the* problem of the public" (p. 208). Public journalists have interpreted this to mean that they should in fact accept the responsibility for such improvement. Rosen (1999) has only half-jokingly defined civic journalism as "what Dewey meant" (p. 24).

Another major contribution in this cluster comes from Habermas, whose writings on the emergence and transformation of the public sphere from a place where citizens participate in civic life to a place where consumers are manipulated by money and power have been assimilated and adapted by Barber (1984) and Yankelovich (1991). The central and enduring message of these forebears is that publics are capable of producing good decisions, given the necessary combination of information, deliberation, respect, and power (see Appendix A).

History. This is in some ways an eclectic collection, shaped by personal preferences of the researcher. But the historical lesson to be learned from works such as Leonard (1995) and McGerr (1986) is that the worries about the power of the press and its abdication of its duties; its susceptibility to political and business pressures; and its own egotistical and sensationalist failings may be difficult to resolve but are certainly nothing new. Leonard (1995), for example, manages to make the historical link between the news business and the public's business. He argues that newspapers deliberately set out to create readers, as opposed to the more usual historical view that citizen/readers were clamoring for news and demanded their publications in order to participate in the democratic process. Leonard says that academicians have, for the most part, created a "phantom public" (p. xii) extrapolated from accounts of publishers, stories of famous reporters and copies of old newspapers; and he tries to show that "there was no age of innocence" peopled by high-minded publishers and readers. "Deception and defiance have always helped to circulate the news, and today's problems will be clearer if they are not set, falsely, as a fall from grace. The commerce of news helped to form an idea of citizenship and Americans' sense of their national community" (p. xiii). McGerr (1986) makes the interesting observation that in the mid-19th century, politics mostly took place indoors but much of political life was "acted out in the street." It "demanded legitimacy conferred by all classes of the people through parades and rallies and huge turnouts" (p. 5). He attempts to explain not only voter turnout decline but why "vital democratic theater" has disappeared (p. 6). Part of the story is the decline in the power of political parties (p. 7) but political style changed, reflecting the "needs and experiences of different classes in the North after the Civil War" (p. 10). McGerr argues that the authority of partisanship weakened, class relations changed, and liberal politics appeared to fail; the change in the style of politics dates not from the 1980s, which not coincidentally is the jumping-off point for most civic journalism literature reviews, but to the 1860s-1920s. Other histories, such as Ryan's 1997 look at the exercise of democracy in public spaces and Egerton's (1995) exploration of the South's failure to capitalize on its post-WWII chance for "opportunity, growth, prosperity, recovered self-esteem, national parity, and full citizenship" (p. 5), provide a much-needed perspective on life and politics in the United States. Other suggestions are included in Appendix B.

Media practice-democracy-public life. This cluster is at the heart of the civic journalism literature. This literature makes explicit the connection among the three. The message here, from civic journalism advocates, is that the relative health of each is dependent on the other. Carey's (1995) comments are compellingly typical of this group: "Unless we are willing to entertain the possibility . . . that we are defined, at least in part, by the communities we inhabit, I see no possibility of recovering a meaningful notion of public life or public opinion. Unless we can see the story of our lives as part of a narrative of a public community, a community of general citizenship rather than one restricted by class, race, gender, and so on, while simultaneously believing that our lives are also embedded in communities of private identity–family, city, tribe, nation, party or cause– [only then]. . . can . . . the press . . . make a moral and political difference" (p. 400).

Those less enamored of civic journalism find a place in this category as well, but they are far outnumbered. Peters wrote in 1989 that the link between media practice and democracy needed to be made more explicit; he argues that mass communication theory traditionally has bracketed not only external political debate but its own political stance "to carry out a political project without being articulate about that project" (p. 199). Theorists, he adds, "thought themselves talking narrowly about the mass media and their 'effects,' while they were in fact talking about the perils and possibilities of democracy" (p. 200). More recently, however, he has argued that that civic journalism's vision of democracy doesn't appreciate the obstacles to its success, that the idea of democracy as citizens engaged in public dialogue facilitated by the press is only one of several competing theories of how democracy should work (Peters, 1999).

Schudson (1999) argues that civic journalism is basically a conservative reform movement in the tradition of Progressivism. Like the Progressive reforms, civic journalism "advances an unresolved blend of empowering the people and entrusting elites and experts with public responsibility . . . [and] emphasizes procedure over outcome" (p. 123). Schudson also argues that the civic journalism debate misunderstands the Lippmann-Dewey debate; civic journalism proponents think they're on the Dewey side, but he declares: "Neither Lippmann nor Dewey said anything in their encounter that might encourage a view that journalists should be central agents of social transformation or community construction" (p. 124). Schudson would get a fierce argument from many on this point.

Translation/links. This may be the most rewarding and interesting category. Academic research and professional practice have traditionally been separated by a nearly impermeable line. In this cluster, academics and professionals are talking not only to each other but also to each other's audiences as well. As noted in Appendix C, a number of works by Rosen and Merritt, along with Charity and Friedland, fit in this category. This category is distinguished not so much by its content as by its intended audiences (Appendix D).

Assessment: This cluster includes not only empirical but also theoretical work. Assessments have been undertaken by public journalists themselves, foundations that provide funding and other support, and academic researchers. The theoretically inclined literature has ranged from definitions to ethics to postmodernism to cultivation theory to comparative studies of civic journalism and developmental journalism. The range is broad enough that a researcher could easily pluck one or two journal articles out of the group and support nearly any hypothesis. In a wild example, Loomis (1998) argued that "critics have charged or implied . . . that the philosophy of citizen-based, or public, journalism provides a cover for junk journalism–journalism on the cheap, in which, for example, publishers are more likely to use less-expensive wire-service copy than stories produced more expensively by their own staffs." Not too surprisingly, his secondary analysis of survey data collected by Meyer and Potter (1997) handily disproved his hypothesis. Most of the empirical research, however, has been adequate. Reviews of similar studies shows mixed results; for example, content analyses attempting to determine whether civic journalism newspapers handle sources differently have had somewhat contradictory results.

Case studies have been completed in a number of communities, but broad-based syntheses have not been forthcoming. Clearly, civic journalism projects have made some differences in some communities, but such change is difficult to capture, much less generalize. Journalists' own accounts about their experiences with civic journalism are refreshingly honest about their successes and failures; reports from foundations are generally positive but include the negatives as well (e.g., Schaffer & Miller, 1995).

Case studies provide the best hope, however, for assessing changes in the quality of public life, which is the ultimate aim of civic journalism. More media content-based studies can help journalists assess their efforts in terms of their intent, i.e., to see if changes in the philosophy of professional practice manifest in content changes. McMillan, Guppy, Kunz, and Reis (1998) found in the case of The Wichita Eagle that content changes were marginal, as did Blazier (1997) in his study of the Seattle Times and Massey (1998) in his study of the Tallahassee Democrat. Manifest content may not be the best indicator of change, however. A qualitative assessment, perhaps using techniques not yet invented, may be more in order.

The overall message from the assortment of assessment efforts is that civic journalism is not a miracle cure, where the professionals can prescribe the same cure for all and it will work 99.9 percent of the time. The interplay of community history, the media's existing reputation, the skill of the journalists, the social and economic factors that help or hinder public life–all of these variables affect the success of any journalistic effort. (This category is not appended as it is quite huge. It is available on disk from the author.)

How to/teaching. This small section of the literature nevertheless fulfills an important job: helping others learn how to do civic journalism. Some examples are suggested in Appendix E.

Conclusion: Interdisciplinary complements and challenges

This model of the existing literature in civic journalism shows that the literature is fairly self-contained and self-referencing. The stimulation for new thinking is confined to a few core "forebears" and an idiosyncratic sense of political, social and press history. Although the Lippmann-Dewey debate provided the initial stimulus for much of the civic journalism theory, it has been revisited a goodly number of times and it is probably time to bring it to a close. The literature reviewed here (gathered from books, articles, and other bibliographies) shows a distressing lack of appreciation for the research and theory of those engaged in somewhat parallel studies of community-enhancing endeavors, such as community policing, neighborhood organizing, and public conflict resolution. Although there is much reference to social and civic capital, a deeper understanding of the role of social networks might be useful for future research. A variety of other works that could inform civic journalism theory and practice, listed in Appendix F, show up rarely, if ever, in the civic journalism literature.

This review also revealed a dearth of theoretically informed criticism of civic journalism. Nearly all of the materials that fell into the translation cluster can be considered positive in nature. (One explanation may be the author's bias and an unwillingness to accept negative interpretations as legitimate translations.) The materials in the trade/popular articles and books cluster displayed both positive and negative assessments, but the negative work was not particularly well-argued or well-informed for the most part. Constructive criticism would do much toward advancing civic journalism theory and practice.

This review of the civic journalism literature offers no overarching conclusions about the efficacy of civic journalism. It can, however, suggest that the theory needs to move out and beyond its original and sustaining ideas, and that its practice could benefit from a better appreciation of complementary work in other professions and disciplines. This model could serve not only as a map of the ways civic journalism research is shared and informs other clusters of work, but also as a model of the way it can and should be shared in the best tradition of civic journalism philosophy.

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Media Practice-Democracy-Public Life
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Resolving Public Conflict:

Civic Journalism and Civil Society

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Abstract

Practitioners in civic journalism and public conflict resolution are independently experimenting with ways to facilitate communication and mediate conflict. Civic journalism can provide the public sphere in which conflict resolution can move from individual rights-based models toward public judgment models, where "the good life" might be realized. For journalists, public conflict resolution models offer a complementary philosophy and practical guides to mediation processes. Together, these transformative models of professional practice have great potential for enriching civil society.

Resolving Public Conflict:

Civic Journalism and Civil Society

Introduction

Theories of civic journalism and public conflict resolution should complement each other very well as journalists and citizens, community leaders and activists, philosophers and politicians struggle to find ways to "help public life go well." But in theory as well as in practice, the two ideas rarely coincide. Honeyman (1999), for example, notes wryly that "[newspaper] readers would be unwise to rely on journalists to paint a picture of what is going on in the handling of conflict these days" (p. 13).

When these theories do converge, the combination generally attracts no more than a passing paragraph–and the appraisal is mixed. On the media side, journalist and civic journalism advocate Cole Campbell (1999) suggested recently that journalists should "learn more about the process of problem solving, so we can fashion more helpful news reports that address problems and [ways of] devising solutions to them" (p. xxv). Others strongly (albeit briefly) disagree; communications scholar Michael Schudson (1999) says flatly: "Whatever authority journalists may have, it does not lie in the area of community organizing or conflict mediation" (p. 125).

Public conflict resolution theorists and practitioners give very little attention to the role of the press in general; for example, Pruitt and Rubin (1986), in their book Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate and Settlement, never mention the media. When others in this field do mention the press, they also are divided on its proper role. Their approaches can be arrayed along a continuum that ranges from careful avoidance of the media by participants in public conflict resolution processes (Susskind & Cruikshank, 1987) to "management" of the media (Lewicki, Litterer, Minton, & Saunders, 1994) to limited cooperation (Carpenter & Kennedy, 1988; Creighton, 1992) to full partnership (Susskind & Field, 1996). Susskind and Field (1996) specifically, albeit briefly, address the potential of civic journalism.

Although the theory and practices of civic journalism and public conflict resolution have much in common, any attempt to link them quickly becomes challenging. On the one hand, civic journalism advocates have been reluctant to saddle their emerging movement with precise definitions, concept explications or clearly formulated theory. On the other hand, there are a number of models and variations on models of public conflict resolution. Therefore, a brief review of civic (or public) journalism and public conflict resolution models is in order.

Civic journalism

Although as noted, civic journalism proponents have been loath to commit themselves to definitions and explicit theories that might constrain their experiments, there is general agreement that journalists are uniquely positioned and morally obligated to help public life go well. Rosen (1995) speaks of civic journalism as a way to "model democratic habits of mind and conversation." He continues:

> To acknowledge a political 'identity' as a public journalist is to agree that you have a stake in public life–that you are a member of the community, and not a mechanism outside it. This does not mean that the press can become a partisan or advocate. But neither is it to withdraw into a stance of civic exile, where what's happening to the community somehow isn't happening to you as a professional.

Public journalists see ordinary citizens as perfectly capable of good decision-making; these journalists understand their roles as facilitators of dialogue among various and diverse segments of the population, across race and class lines, among public and private organizations. They try, sometimes more successfully than others, to contextualize information, to open avenues for discussion, to connect people and policy makers and institutions in ways that facilitate problem-solving.

Problems of crime and urban decay contributed to the general feeling among some journalists and academics in the late 1980s and early 1990s that their profession–and the democratic process–was in trouble. These journalists "saw that the very problems they had come to journalism to help solve still weren't being solved, or even being very intelligently addressed. Inner cities continued to decay, deficits to grow, schools to flounder; city hall and statehouse policies were as unfocused as ever" (Charity, 1995, p. 1). The responses of editors and reporters in diverse cities coalesced into one basic premise: "Journalism ought to make it as easy as possible for citizens to make intelligent decisions about public affairs, and to get them carried out" (Charity, 1995, p. 2). "The truth is that American society doesn't make it easy for busy people to be good citizens. . . . Public journalists are simply those people who began to look for opportunities to make citizenship easier through the specific powers of the press" (Charity, 1996, p. 7-8).

In other words, public journalists have defined themselves as those willing to help reconstitute and empower the public:

> In effect, public journalism would add the duty of public involvement to the traditional responsibilities of the press, e.g., surveillance, agenda-setting, watchdog. The philosophy as applied would have a news medium purposefully organize its resources and activities to educate and interest people in the public sphere. (Denton, Thorson, & Coyle, 1995, p. 3)

Public journalists further define that role as promoting process, not solutions. Charity (1995) calls it public journalism's "golden rule": "Journalism should advocate democracy without advocating particular solutions" (p. 146). Merritt (1995) adds: "Public journalism is a search for ways that journalism can serve a purpose beyond . . . merely telling the news. That purpose is reinvigorating [civic] life by re-engaging people in it" (p. 262).

Yankelovich (1991) outlines three stages of public deliberation that have been accepted as the basic blueprint for most civic journalism projects: consciousness-raising about an issue; working through the problem in a deliberative dialogue; and finally, resolving the problem in full recognition and acceptance of the solution's compromises and deficiencies (pp. 63-65).

The idea of civic journalism clearly offers some possibilities for complementing public conflict resolution theories, which will be explored next.

Public conflict resolution

Campbell and Floyd (1996) offer a concise definition of conflict: "Conflict is the result of scarcity of either tangible or intangible valued objects" (p. 235). Carpenter and Kennedy (1988) define public conflicts as "controversies that affect members of the public beyond the primary negotiators" (p. 4). Public disputes, they say, are characterized by complicated networks of interests, reflected in the emergence of new parties during the dispute; varying levels of expertise in legal, financial or other areas; varying forms of power; short-term relationships among the parties; different corporate cultures involved in decision making procedures; and unequal accountability to the law, to employers, or to volunteer group members (pp. 5-8). Public disputes are also characterized by strongly held values, a broad range of issues, and a lack of standardized procedures for dealing with them.

One approach to understanding public conflict resolution theories or models is to view them in one of two ways: diagnosing the nature of a dispute or describing the process of dispute resolution. In the first group, for example, is a triad of models that view conflict either as a misunderstanding, resolvable by simply clearing it up; as conflict of interests that are amenable to compromise; or as a conflict of basic principles not easily mediated away (Campbell & Floyd, 1996; Crowfoot & Wondolleck, 1990). Greenhalgh (1999) offers a conflict diagnostic model that identifies various dimensions, such as the type of issue itself, i.e., a matter of principle or the size of the stakes involved, and places each on a "viewpoint continuum" of difficult- to easy-to-resolve.

A second approach is look at public conflict resolution as "dispute processing," as Dukes (1996) calls it. Lewicki et al. (1994) summarize and integrate seven "phase" models that pinpoint stages of negotiation in a conflict resolution process, such as stating and defending a position, i.e., the initiation stage; searching for solutions, called the problem-solving phase; and negotiating an agreement, dubbed the resolution phase. The authors also distinguish between prescriptive and descriptive models in the current literature. More significantly, however, they offer three other ideas. The first is an alternative model that incorporates the idea that conflict resolution processes are shaped by underlying social structures, such as "a shared mental model of the task to be accomplished . . . and the recognized rules of conversational exchange" (p. 178). The second is a concern that descriptive models show how successful negotiations proceed but often do not address those negotiations that stall in one phase or break down entirely. The third concept of special note is the recognition of "the problems of perceptual error and framing that precede and shape" (p. 179) the first phase of negotiation. Much of this perception arises from "past situations, attitudes and behaviors . . . gained through direct or vicarious experience" (p. 180). (This vicarious experience is arguably a product, at least in part, of the press coverage of the issue at hand.) The authors run through various perceptual distortions that afflict parties to a negotiation: stereotyping, halo effects, selective perception, projection, and perceptual defenses–all designed to filter new information so that it does not clash too terribly with people's preconceptions about the issue and each other (p. 182-184). In addition, the disputants are subject to the variances in issue framing and prone to the "fundamental attributional error" in which they tend to give undue weight to the impact of situational elements and underestimate the impact of personal factors in predicting outcomes (p. 185).

Pruitt and Rubin (1986) model a conflict escalation curve that shows how conflicts tend to escalate over time, especially when the parties involved each feel powerful, fail to see any mutually beneficial solutions, and see the other as having high aspirations they are unlikely to abandon (p. 65-67). They outline five transformations that occur during conflict escalation, either singly or in combinations (p. 64):

- Influence attempts move from light to heavy (ingratiation/persuasion to threats/violence);
- The number of issues tends to proliferate and parties commit more and more resources to their stance;
- The issues tend to move from a specific problem to more general problems;
- The parties move from wanting to do well for themselves to wanting to hurt the other;
- The number of parties tends to increase.

Pruitt and Rubin also offer the aggressor-defender model. in which the aggressor initiates the conflict by seeking something he sees that would improve his position. In this model, the defender reacts in response to the aggressor. If the aggressor escalates the conflict, the defender reacts in kind. Another view is the structural change model; in this model, the conflict itself leaves behind structural changes, such as psychological changes, changes in groups, and changes in communities, that encourage further conflict, making the escalation both "antecedent and consequent of structural changes" (p. 92).

Carpenter and Kennedy (1988) elaborate a slightly more dynamic model in which a "spiral" of unmanaged conflict evolves in the following way:

- The problem emerges; with no easy answers, citizens become worried.
- Sides form.
- Positions harden. "People talk more with others of similar views and less with people with whom they disagree, even in circumstances that not related to the dispute" (p. 13).
- Communication stops, i.e., "public discussions [turn] to public debate" (p. 13).
- Resources are committed to defend positions.
- Conflict goes outside the community, as people look to national groups or politicians for support.
- Perceptions become distorted, i.e., "shades of gray disappear and only black and white remain" (p. 14).
- A sense of crisis emerges.

In this last stage, the authors simply assert that "newspapers highlight arguments between community leaders and ignore positive efforts toward resolution" (p. 15). They also point out that modeling public conflict resolution as a spiral illustrates how unmanaged conflicts become more serious as people become fearful and end up raising the stakes of their claims without really knowing what they are facing. They conclude: "The great value of taking a hard look at where the dispute is on the spiral is that one can then choose an interim strategy that will slow down or stop expansion of the conflict" (p. 16).

Susskind and Field (1996) outline a prescriptive model for dispute resolution they call the "mutual gains approach." It has six principles (p. 37):

- Acknowledge the concerns of the other side;
- Encourage joint fact finding;
- Offer compensation for both known and unknown impacts;
- Accept responsibility for mistakes and share power;
- Act in a trustworthy fashion at all times;
- Build long-term relationships.

Susskind and Field advocate trust in the public's ability to understand a problem and cope with it. They call on business executives to exhibit "principled leadership" in the face of an angry public, such as the ones that emerged in the wake of the Exxon Valdez oil spill and the Three Mile Island catastrophe.

Dukes (1996) argues that the "dispute processing" models have preoccupied theorists and practitioners, pointing out that different models work in different ways in different communities; to try to catalog them invariably leads to impoverished theory that cannot account for the "dynamic nature of conflict . . . [or] the flexibility and adaptivity of dispute processes . . . [while] it implicitly accepts the 'conflict is bad' paradigm" (p. 103). Dukes has much broader aspirations for public conflict resolution: "Public conflict resolution ought instead to challenge fundamental problems of community and governance" (p. x). Dukes rejects the idea that public conflict resolution should be a management tool used to address the "crisis of governance"; instead, he argues, public conflict resolution can be "a vehicle for transforming citizenry, communities, and the private and public institutions of contemporary democratic society" (p. 7). He argues passionately that a means must be found to move beyond the practical need for agreement in public life. There is a moral need, he contends, "to move beyond the type of fighting which characterizes so much public conflict. This moral need has led to the search not only for common ground for but higher ground: a ground for engagement in public issues on terms such as fairness, integrity, openness, compassion, and responsibilities" (p. 2). Dukes summarizes the problems of contemporary democratic society as seemingly intractable, accompanied by the growing and potentially permanent disillusion and disenfranchisement of the underclass. Public life is seen as nasty and argumentative; citizens are interested in participating but the cost is too great in terms of ugly adversarialism. Political myth is responsible for polarizing citizens in terms of "left" or "right" (pp. 3-6). Public conflict resolution, he concludes, "has considerable potential for challenging the sense of decline, hopelessness, and distrust permeating civic culture" (p. 7).

Dukes (1996) proposes a transformative ideal of public conflict resolution, whose goals are an engaged community, responsive governance, and a capacity for problem solving (p. 9). In this way, drawing on the political philosophies of Barber (1984) and Habermas (1991), Dukes meshes a detailed history of public conflict resolution with the crisis of postmodern life and its inheritance of empirical science, industrial capitalism and liberal democracy, which together produced doctrines of instrumental reason, market rationality and possessive individualism–and an impoverishment of civil and social life. In the tradition of Robert Park, George Herbert Mead, and Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Seidler, and Tipton (1985), Dukes argues that "it is through social interaction that the individual reaches full autonomy, and it is fully realized human beings who take responsibility for others and who best nurture community" (p. 146).

Dukes' work provides the necessary segue to move this discussion from its starting point in the media, through public conflict resolution and on to theories of civil society. First, however, a brief return to the idea of civic journalism and its role in social processes, including conflict resolution, is in order. Rosen (1996) emphatically argues that

> [Civic] journalism at its best is independent . . . and also connected. It stands apart from the community in certain respects but it is a part of the community in many others. Public journalism is about staring this fact in the face. But it is not only journalists who must face it. Corporations, universities, foundations, community leaders, neighborhood associations, businesses, volunteer groups, political parties, public officials everyone who enters the public arena in the United States–have learned a way of public negotiation that actually reinforces the isolation of the journalist. . . . Public relations, publicity-seeking, "media relations," or corporate communications . . . imply a stance toward journalists that expects the worst (negative news) and hopes for the best: a positive spin, a press release printed, a story that will reflect well on a group and impress its funders, its bosses, its customers, its voters and the folks at home. Given the power of the news media, this attitude is entirely understandable. In fact, we understand it so well that almost all of us have become experts at the manipulate-the-media game.

Each of the models of public conflict resolution described above envision a role for the media, either implicitly or explicitly. As noted earlier, these roles range from the invisible, in which the public conflict resolution theorists simply do not address the media at all, to models that include a specific approach to dealing with the media. Some prescriptive models, most of them developed a decade or so ago, urge participants in a public conflict resolution process to agree in advance on rules for talking to the media (Susskind & Cruikshank, 1987; Carpenter & Kennedy, 1988, p. 124). Carpenter and Kennedy appear to look more favorably on the media than most, noting the advantages to public conflict resolution process when the media are "treated as interested members of the community, rather than as adversaries" (p. 186). Dukes (1996), in arguing for his expanded scope of public conflict resolution, gives civic journalism a nod in noting that some study circle groups have worked with civic journalism newspapers. The most extensive treatment of civic journalism, however, is in Susskind and Field's 1996 book, Dealing with an angry public: The mutual gains approach to resolving disputes. They have a much more productive role in mind for the media than simply being "used" by parties to the public conflict resolution process. They suggest that people on both sides of a dispute approach the media together and ask them to play an educational role, not to take sides, and to be a partner in the dispute resolution process (p. 213). The media "might learn something," they declare (p. 219), from the example set by the principles of the mutual gains approach. And although they have reservations about the media, who "do not make the best forum for resolving public debates" (p. 221), Susskind and Field nonetheless suggest that the media can help the public conflict resolution process if both those who seek to manipulate the press and the media themselves develop a new relationship.

Susskind and Field (1996) introduce their media section by comforting their fellow conflict resolution practitioners: "If it's any consolation, the media has an angry public on its hands, too. . . . The media are viewed by the public as part of the problem–polarizing the debate, turning complex arguments into overly simplified sound bites, and transforming the search for justice into a spectacle" (pp. 218-219). And communications scholars Anderson, Dardenne, and Killenberg (1997) suggest an explanation for the tendency of public conflict resolution theorists to marginalize the role of the press: Journalism may be considered peripheral because journalists have sold themselves as mere conduits of information. The message to journalism is that it's part of the problem but not part of the solution (p. 102). Journalists have defined themselves that way as well. The authors contend the media are present in the debate over civic life mostly as a scapegoat; they worry that civic journalists are mostly talking to themselves. But, "Even more alarming is the virtual neglect of journalism by proponents of political community building, who rarely mention institutional journalism, much less assign newspapers a vital role in stimulating democracy and citizenship. . . . This neglect suggests journalism's thin credibility in the larger social discussion of democracy itself" (Anderson, Dardenne, & Killenberg, p. 100).

As the above discussion indicates, there is not much evidence of public conflict resolution as democratic practice and civic journalism converging in practice. One reason may be that public conflict resolution work has tended to focus on discrete issues, such as environmental conflicts (for examples, see Crowfoot & Wondolleck, 1990). Single-issue disputes are generally not the focus of civic journalism initiatives, which lean toward broader discussions less focused on resolving a particular problem. Civic journalism projects tend to focus on election issues, broad neighborhood revitalization issues, or structural issues such as poverty. Dukes' (1996) vision of public conflict resolution as a way of engaging more global issues of civic life provides the best philosophical match for civic journalism.

Putnam (1993) sees social capital, created by a vigorous civic life, as the critical component that enables people to work together to resolve intractable problems. It is in the notions of enhancing community and civic life the civic journalism and public conflict resolution can come together.

The good life and civil society

In The Good City and the Good Life (1995), Daniel Kemmis tells a gentle story about Missoula to make two central points: "No individual citizen can be whole or healthy except as a member of a whole and healthy community" (p. 81); and "City-states [may] prove to be more capable than nations of generating prosperity [and] or deploying that prosperity to address social problems. . . . A city is by its nature organic, , and . . . it bears to its surrounding region an organic relationship that is the very essence of a successful economy" (p. 105). The synthesis of these two ideas is summed up as follows: "Refocusing of human energy around the organic wholeness of cities or city-states promise a profound rehumanizing of the shape and condition of our lives" (p. 151).

Kemmis barely acknowledges, however, that disputes over how the good life is to be realized may not be so easily resolved in the midst of competition to achieve individual goals (for example, a clash between entrepreneurs and environmentalists). In earlier work, he had noted that classic liberal democracy has no room for common values (Kemmis, 1990, p. 60). "In most localities on most issues, the political pendulum is pushed back and forth endlessly, but the higher public good which everyone feels must be there never emerges" (p. 67). He uses as his example clashes over rural development outside Missoula, where city folks and rural folks couldn't see that what made them devoted to their way of life was in part the existence of the other (access to open space for the city-dwellers, access to city amenities for the ranchers).

Kemmis builds his idea of the good life on a particular vision of community; his favorite adjectival phrase is that of a "city in grace" and his favorite metaphor for such a city is the Missoula Farmers Market, where weekly the people of the city celebrate their life together in organic wholeness. In this, Kemmis has melded Bender's (1978) definitions of community as an aggregate of people who share a common interest in a particular locality; of community as an experience more than a place or local activity (i.e., "Community is where community happens," p. 6); and of community as "a network of social relations marked by mutuality and emotional bonds" (p. 7). In Bender's conception of community, such mutuality and emotional bonds mediate political conflict.

But achieving the "good life" is more than a matter of vision of community bonding. Fischer (1991) distinguishes between social and political ties, arguing that subcommunities such as neighborhoods provide fewer social ties but stronger political ties. These strong local political ties engender a neighborhood ideology of NIMBYism, and a strengthening of the idea that "free pursuit of the private good is the public good" (p. 89). Such "free pursuit" leads inevitably to conflict, and this conflict is seen by many as instrumental in the decay of public life. Sociologists and others argue that a decline in associational life has reduced our capacity to resolve differences by diminishing our sense of common purpose and knowledge of each other (e.g., Putnam, 1995). Others contend that associational life has not declined but merely changed (Ladd, 1996); or that in any event, some kinds of voluntary associations are more conducive to promoting civic life than others (Galston & Levine, 1997).

Some observers, such as Bloomberg (1966), are not impressed with associational projects undertaken for the "good of the community," arguing that such claims are almost always for the good of the few, may harm others, pretend that "the community has no special interest groups, no factions, no conflicts, no major disagreements over means and ends, . . . and may be [most] useful as political rhetoric" (p. 363). Bloomberg is even more cynical about what he calls the "life cycle of bourgeois civic revolt": Good Citizens Discover Disturbing Problems, Good Citizens Determine the Cause, Good Citizens Throw the Rascals Out or establish a Key Reform, Good Citizens fail to recognize that they have made no difference. Participation in voluntary associations make citizens feel they are doing something, but "it never occurs to them that this may be an illusion sustained by group ideology and supported by a deferential local press" (p. 399). Their "impact on community development" he concludes, "is usually conservative or trivial" (p. 401). And lest it be argued that Bloomberg's 33-year-old ideas are dated, consider Himmelfarb's 1998 worries that the "ubiquity" of the phrase "civil society" has drained it of meaning. She complains that with people of all political persuasions agreeing that "mediating structures, voluntary associations, families, communities, churches, and workplaces are the corrective to an inordinate individualism and an overweening state" that civil society has become a "rhetorical panacea" (p. 117). She argues that some advocates of civil society are using it as a way to avoid hard moral choices and to transfer social responsibilities from the state to "civil society" (p. 122).

Walzer (1998) defines "civil society" as "the space of uncoerced human association and also the set of relational networks–formed for the sake of family, faith, interest, and ideology–that fill this space" (p. 124). He identifies four rival ideologies competing for the "good life." The first two come from the left:

- The good life is embedded in the political community; "to live well is to be politically active" for the process itself allows us to express our best rational and moral ideas (p. 125). This, he says, is an illusion; it may be a good life but it's not one that we actually live (p. 126).
- The good life "involves a turning away from republican politics and a focus instead on economic activity" (p. 126). In this view, the state's job is allow productivity of the type envisioned by Marx, where "we can all be producers" (p. 126). Creativity is the highest calling, and the "cooperative economy" co-exists with a nonpolitical, conflict-free state.

Walzer's next two ideologies come from the right:

- The good life is available through the marketplace where consumers choose among a number of options. Personal choices are the key, regardless of what that choice is, it's the ability to make a choice that counts (p. 128). Protecting the marketplace, he notes, requires state action but it doesn't require citizenship (p. 129).
- The good life is set in the nation, "within which we are loyal members, bound to one another by ties of blood and history" (p. 130). However, this ideology requires little more than rituals and vicarious participation in community (p. 131).

None of these ideologies, Walzer argues, is sufficient because they all "miss the complexity of human society, the inevitable conflicts of commitment and loyalty" (p. 132). The ideology of civil society is not so much a fifth alternative as it is a corrective to the other four. It is "a liberal version of the four answers, accepting them all, insisting that each leave room for the others, therefore not finally accepting any of them" (p. 132). Kemmis' vision of the "good life" does just that.

Walzer (1998) concludes: "Civil society is tested by its capacity to produce citizens whose interests, at least sometimes, reach farther than themselves and their comrades, who look after the political community that fosters and protects the associational networks" (p. 140). Accepting this conclusion brings this discussion back full circle to the complementary ideas of public conflict resolution and civic journalism. If citizens need to look beyond themselves, it is because their personal interests are not always perfectly aligned. Conflict is the result. To resolve it, citizens need to communicate. Civic journalism and public conflict resolution have been independently experimenting with new ways to facilitate communication and mediate conflict; independently, both have the potential to enhance civic life and provide a way to work toward "the good life." Civic journalism can help provide the public sphere where decision-making can move out of a competitive, individual rights-based model and into a public judgment mode, where visions of a common good can be realized. Public conflict resolution models provide complementary philosophies as well as practical guidance through the thickets of mediation and facilitation processes. Together, however, these two transformative models of professional practice have even greater potential for enhancing community and enriching civil society.

Civic journalism's potential in public conflict resolution

One way to look at civic journalism's potential to assist in public conflict resolution is consider again the various models of public conflict resolution theory and identify the points at which a different role for the media might be constructive. Lewicki et al. (1994) describe shared mental models and a number of perceptual and structural issues that all owe at least something to media framing, not only of specific issues but of the overall possibility of finding common ground. Civic journalists attempt to frame issues as solvable problems and downplay sensationalist accounts of conflict, while highlighting areas of public agreement–even if the agreement is simply recognition of a public problem. This approach, practiced widely and consistently, could do much to provide a problem-solving context for specific issues. Pruitt and Rubin's (1986) conflict escalation curve and the conflict spiral described by Carpenter and Kennedy (1988) both describe ways that positions harden, issues balloon from the specific to the general, communication stalls and perceptions become distorted. Media coverage that highlights conflict and fails to describe the developing areas of resolution simply exacerbates the dispute; conversely, media coverage, such as the model suggested by Honeyman (1999), can help support the process and contribute to problem-solving in the future: "Even when the main subject of the article has to be the substance of a particular dispute, or of its settlement, a sidebar note on 'how it got there' could be valuable in explaining the context," Honeyman says, and adds:

> Most stories treat . . . negotiations as if they were inexorable bilateral processes–rather than the product of carefully managed work involving a third party. . . . If journalists continue to fail to outline the dimensions of dispute resolution, this limits consumer choice. What's more, the void of information in the media about dispute resolution adversely affects communities' ability to generate social capital. People are less likely to volunteer time or think up new approaches to a movement that their local media seem to think insignificant.

Susskind and Field's (1996) mutual gains approach is overly dependent on good will and the power of moral conviction to ward off the wrath of a wronged public. They fail to acknowledge the inequities of power and resources that complicate dispute resolution. As Campbell and Floyd (1996) have observed, mediation is used more and more frequently, in more and more institutional settings, to resolve conflicts. However, they say, mediation may not be appropriate when fundamental values are involved, and they also worry that citizen groups may be co-opted while power imbalances are perpetuated (p. 236). Rubin (1999) critiques most public conflict resolution models for their reliance on predictions of white, Western, upper middle-class male behavior. One of civic journalism's strengths is its commitment to illuminating the value differences that underlie most public policy disputes; civic journalism practices can also help balance powerful interests and the white male/class bias by its insistence on listening to all voices, most especially the non-expert ones. Civic journalism can also learn from public conflict resolution the differences between mediation and facilitation (Crowfoot & Wondolleck, 1990). From the associated planning literature, civic journalists can certainly get a better understanding of the multiple public roles professional planners, who are often major players in land use and environmental issues, are expected to play as well (Forester, 1987; Spain, 1993; Grant, 1994).

Pruitt and Rubin (1986) point out that the process of de-escalation of conflict is undertheorized, in part because the conflict spiral and structural change models see conflict as a vicious circle. Incorporating the ideas of civic journalism as ways to intervene in the spiral might inform a new model of public conflict resolution that envisions a way to move entire communities further in the direction of the "good life."

Critical responses

Critics of civic journalism might respond, as has Schudson (1999) in the introduction to this paper, that "whatever authority journalists may have, it does not lie in the area of community organizing or conflict mediation" (p. 125). Other critics will insist that journalists do have a vested interest in outcomes, not to mention an overriding interest in economic prosperity, and that such interests cannot be camouflaged by claims that they are solely interested in building social capital, enhancing civic life, and increasing public capacity for problem-solving. Others, such as Merrill (1998), might argue that a search for the common good is misguided from the beginning if it infringes on individual liberty. But the critics generally have nothing to offer but more of the same; "just good journalism" should be sufficient, at least according to some high-profile editors such as Max Frankel (1995), William Woo (1995), and Michael Gartner (1995).

Conclusion

To accept the premise that entrenched journalistic practice is good enough is to say that the journalism and public life of today is as good as it's going to get. Civic journalists have opted not to settle for that, much the same way that innovative thinkers in the field of public conflict resolution have opted to look beyond institutional constraints and adversarial traditions to find better ways to settle disputes. Neither field makes the claim that the common good is simply a matter of obliterating all differences and enforcing a single value system; both fields are searching for a process that will allow citizens to find a way to live with each other's values in the inevitable give and take of community life.

Daniel Kemmis (1995) suggests that politicians, on the whole, are good enough at what they do, but they can be better if their constituents "take on the challenge of becoming good enough citizens" (p. 182). Journalism, by the same token, is just about "good enough" to keep the whole social and political system from breaking down entirely; but it is not good enough to repair or improve it. Civic journalists have challenged themselves to be more than good enough; informed by the theory and methods of public conflict resolution, they can be even better.

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CIVIC JOURNALISM ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE BRAIN:

How Photographers and Graphic Designers Visually Communicate the Principles of Civic Journalism

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CIVIC JOURNALISM ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE BRAIN:

How Photographers and Graphic Designers Visually Communicate the Principles of Civic Journalism

ABSTRACT

As the most hotly debated subject of the decade within the field of journalism, there has been an enormous amount written about civic or public journalism. Yet, the focus of that discussion has invariably left out an entire side of the newsroom – the visual. Nearly all the debate centers around the "verbal" with the "visual" – represented by the work of graphic designers and photographers – excluded from the conversation. This study aims to address this void by giving voice to visual journalists practicing civic journalism.

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INTRODUCTION

John Dewey never spoke directly about the visual side of journalism. Or did he? In his book "The Public and Its Problems," where he proposes a new role for the press in a democracy, one of the subjects Dewey takes up is presentation. "Presentation is fundamentally important, and presentation is a question of art," he wrote (Dewey 1927, 183). But Dewey's meaning is ambiguous. Is he referring to the art of writing? Or to design, layout, and illustration? Dewey's main concern was with dissemination; the public could not be affected by the news unless they read it. So he proposed making the news approachable and aesthetically pleasing. Encouraging people to read it was as important as what it had to say. Dewey's solution was the "freeing of the artist in literary presentation" (1927, 183). Whether his intent was to change the way news was written, they way it was designed and illustrated, or both is of less concern today than the fact that Dewey opened this line of discussion at all. As the intellectual architect of civic journalism, Dewey's thoughts from more than 70 years ago have been cited repeatedly; yet his ideas on this subject have been overshadowed by talk of reconnecting citizens with public life via new listening techniques, reporting practices, and story content. Perhaps it is time that we heed Dewey's concerns about presentation and examine an important but heretofore ignored aspect of civic journalism – its visual communication. If civic journalism seeks to improve the quality of public debate, how might design and photography aid this goal?

As the most hotly debated subject of the decade within the field of journalism, there has been an enormous amount written about civic or public journalism. This new approach to journalism that advocates a more active role for the press has been the subject of countless academic studies, scholarly essays, articles and critiques in journalism trade publications, books, seminars, workshops, and informal discussions around newsroom water coolers. Yet, the focus of that discussion has invariably left out an entire side of the newsroom – the visual. Nearly all the debate centers around the "verbal" with the "visual" – represented by the work of graphic designers and photographers – excluded from the conversation. This study aims to address this void by giving voice to visual journalists practicing civic journalism. It seeks to start a conversation among visual journalists about their philosophy of civic journalism, and techniques for design and photography that fulfill the goals of civic journalism. With all the attention devoted to the reporting and writing of civic journalism, it might seem that participants in the creation and conversation of civic journalism assume the different practices inherent in this new approach to journalism end with "30." However, the discussion about civic journalism and its proper practice has an implicit link to the work of designers and photographers despite the silence in the field on this subject. Proponents of civic journalism claim that this different way of producing news results in content that is significantly different from the content generated by traditional reporting. What reporters write about determines what photographers photograph. Designers are taught that the form of their designs must reflect the content of the stories rather than artistic expression or trends – a principle known as content-driven design. If the content of civic journalism is different, and design and photography are driven by content, then shouldn't design and photography for civic journalism be different than design and photography for traditional journalism? This is a key question that visual communicators and civic journalists must address if the final product is to truly integrate verbal and visual meaning. The changes to the way photographers and designers work are no less important than changes to the way reporters and editors do their jobs. How does this new approach to news affect the jobs of designers and photographers? How does it affect the products they create? Do they have concerns unique to their roles that have not been addressed so far? Specific questions might include, for example, if civic journalism aims to include the views and concerns of ordinary citizens in addition to officials and experts, then what techniques can designers use to signal this change? How will photographers go about illustrating the more issue-oriented stories that civic journalism tends to produce? Should both photographers and designers be looking for new ways to make the news more approachable and aesthetic as Dewey suggested? Including visual journalists in the conversation about how journalism is done can only result in a better vision for the field, and a better news product for the audience. This study seeks to reveal the perspectives and experiences of visual journalists practicing civic journalism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Neither the professional nor scholarly literature contain any references to issues of visual presentation in civic journalism in more than a passing fashion. The most extensive consideration of design for civic journalism came in a 1997 publication by the Pew Center for Civic Journalism (Schaffer & Miller 1997). Nine of 40 pages in this booklet were devoted to examples of design techniques used successfully in published civic journalism projects. The Pew authors did place design and photography on the same level of importance as reporting and writing: Visuals "help readers and viewers see their roles as active participants . . . (and aid) the interactive connections to readers and viewers . . ." (Schaffer & Miller 1997, 25). Among the tools that have been used to convey civic journalism's goals are "About the Series" boxes, grids, Q&As, graphs and charts, maps, coupons, full-pages and spreads, and project indexes.

Only one study so far has alluded to the value of visual communication to civic journalism's goals. The most "depth" in the Wichita *Eagle*'s "The People Project" came in the graphics, said one researcher: "The graphic goes beneath the surface, personality-based coverage of politics typical of traditional journalism" (Riede 1996, 21). This same study called the "innovative use of the 'core values' graphics' . . . the project's most promising attempt at depth in coverage" (Riede 1996, 29).

Jay Rosen described how civic journalism's goals could be achieved through design when he commented that, "If the pages of the newspaper are thought of as a public space designed by journalists, then what the (Wichita) *Eagle* did is arrange this space so that the proper concerns of politics ('issues in depth') shone through" (Rosen 1996). Another example he cited was the Charlotte *Observer's* "Where They Stand" feature; it was more than a voter's guide, he said. When Jesse Helms refused to answer the questions posed by the public, a blank appeared under his name. This was a powerful use of space, charged with visual meaning, said Rosen (1996). In a survey, readers said the "Where They Stand" feature was one of the most useful aspects of the series (Rosen 1996).

At another newspaper, a focus group responded differently to the same information conveyed graphically than when it was reported in a bylined story: "They loved the voter's guide in a grid and asked why we didn't give it to them earlier and repeat it often," said Jan Schaffer of the Pew Center for Civic Journalism (Schaffer 1996). "It seemed to them fairer and more factual. There was no byline and no news peg, just distilled information. Even though it was from bylined stories, the way it was presented seemed to make a difference in how much people believed it" (Schaffer 1996).

Examples of how photography can fulfill public journalism's goals are rarer. One often cited example is the *Wisconsin State Journal's* photo of citizens gathered in the seats of the legislators at the state capitol posing questions to the candidates. The photo was a startling visual, according to Rosen, a visual symbol that things had changed (Rosen 1996).

Inherent in all definitions of design and photography is the idea that such visuals are not simply aesthetic but that they carry content of their own. Moen (1989) defines information as consisting of both form and content. The integration of verbal and visual elements into a coherent whole must begin by bringing meaning to a reader (Miller 1992). Experts disapprove of designs that overemphasize appearance at the expense of communicating content (Hurlburt 1977, Rand 1985, Arnold 1969, Ames 1989, Barnhurst 1994). Research has shown that one way to increase readership is through better design. If one of civic journalism's goals is to create a community conversation, visual journalists and word journalists will need to work together to achieve this goal. Likewise, in order for civic journalism to successfully bring its message to the audience, the final product must integrate written communication with visual communication.

RESEARCH ORIGINS

This research grew out of a previous quantitative study, a content analysis of whether and how the design and photography for public journalism differed from traditional journalism's design and photography. What that kind of study could not capture was how the visual journalists interpreted the goals and practices of public journalism in their work. As a former newspaper designer, reporter, and editor for 15 years, I knew those experiences and accounts could be vastly different from each other, as well as from my own. In addition to learning what some of those different interpretations may be, I hope this study will be the genesis of a conversation about civic journalism among visual journalists that stimulates them to think reflexively about their role in this new movement and helps them take the intellectual journey that is necessary for excellent practice.[1] I also hope that the "word people" in the industry, as well as scholars in the academy, will join the conversation; by neglecting the visual component of mass communication, all concerned with media performance are ignoring an important avenue for creating more meaningful communication for readers.

METHODS

This study uses in-depth interviews with 18 visual journalists at newspapers across the country that have experimented with civic journalism or practice it on a daily basis. It seeks to study "practical" problems as defined by the people involved by identifying the main issues and problems with which these visual civic journalists are struggling. By giving sufficient detail and descriptive accounts of these concerns, others may gain a better understanding. I also hope this work makes a difference by telling these stories that have not been told so far.

The interviews followed an interview guide but also allowed for the exploration of topics not on the guide but raised by the journalists. The topics covered include the relationship of newspaper designers and photographers to civic journalism, their perceptions, thoughts, and behavior regarding civic journalism and how it affected their work processes and products. What they think about civic journalism in general and how they reconcile the principle of content-driven design with the content produced by civic journalism. Whether design and photography for civic journalism should be different and if so, why and how. If not, why not? It is important to include differing opinions on this issue. In addition to these overarching philosophical questions, visual journalists were also asked particular questions, such as what techniques and elements they use to convey civic journalism's goals; for example, how is a "community conversation" visually conveyed? How does design and photography help people get involved with issues? How should photos be different, and what are some of the difficulties encountered when photographing civic journalism stories? How have they dealt with them?

The interviews lasted from 45 minutes to two hours and were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. All journalists but one gave permission to identify them by name, title, and news organization. The journalists interviewed were from the census of newspapers[2] that had received grants from the Pew Center for Civic Journalism in 1998 and 1999. All 29 papers[3] were called to determine the names of journalists serving as design editor and photo editor, or comparably titled positions. The sample was limited to two years in order for journalists to have it fresh in their minds how they dealt with the differences between civic journalism and traditional journalism; I did not want to ask journalists to talk about events that might be long-forgotten if their paper tried one civic journalism experiment and never did another. Additionally, journalism can be a high turn-over profession; if I sampled more than two years back, I would be running the risk of finding no visual journalists currently employed who worked on the project three or more years ago. The list included newcomers to civic journalism as well as papers that had been involved with civic journalism since its inception; some have incorporated civic journalism into their daily practice already. It also included papers from all circulation sizes and regions of the country. All journalists were contacted at least five times by phone; the resulting interviews represent a convenience sample of those who were successfully contacted. No journalist refused to participate in the study; however, many did not return phone messages or were not available at the times they were called. Following Grounded Theory's (Strauss & Corbin 1998, Charmaz 1983, Glaser & Strauss 1967) theoretical sampling, more journalists were added during the research when it was deemed that they could add a perspective that had not been voiced. I was primarily interested in interviewing a population that represented certain important dimensions rather than having a representative sample.

In addition, the other principles of Grounded Theory were followed (Strauss & Corbin 1998, Charmaz 1983, Glaser & Strauss 1967). Using the evidence of real life, I attempted to constantly compare across cases to uncover the generalizable processes at work. This procedure followed Grounded Theory's method of stressing discovery and theory development rather than logical deductive reasoning relying on previously developed theoretical frameworks. This research attempts to add innovative concepts rather than elaborate on existing theory. The coding came out of the data in an attempt to generalize the processes and identify abstract concepts. In the focused coding stage, I attended to only certain things that seemed to represent patterns.

What follows may not be the same story these visual journalists would tell, but I hope it is a story they will recognize as one that could honestly be told.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The philosophical and its link to the practical

The discussion about civic journalism in general can be logically divided into two aspects: the philosophical and the practical. It is interesting to note that the accounts from these visual journalists on questions of practice are detailed, on point, and well developed, in contrast with their responses to philosophical questions such as whether design and photography for civic journalism should be different from traditional journalism. While some of the journalists interviewed were confident and articulate about their philosophies, just as many were unsure, appeared not to have thought about it, or seemed to avoid the question altogether. It would be surprising and unlikely to receive such responses from verbal journalists if they were asked "Do you think civic journalism needs to be reported and written differently than traditional journalism?" A big problem for some of these visual journalists (as it is for many journalists in general) was the definition of civic journalism. For example, in response to whether design for civic journalism should be different from traditional journalism, one said: "I really don't know. It depends on how you define civic journalism. I'm not really sure what your definition of that is; maybe you can explain it to me?" (Wright 1998). Said another, "The distinction between civic journalism and just good journalism sometimes escapes me . . . so could you clarify that for me? (Wakely 1999). A third answered the question about civic journalism design being different by simply cutting to the core: "Define public journalism for me" (Journalist Z 1998). Another started with a clarification: "Let me say something first about the whole concept of civic journalism . . ." and then gave her definition of civic journalism, saying, "I think of all the best journalism is like that and we kinda make this distinction with civic journalism and I don't think we should." (Tate 2000).

Sometimes, rather than answering the question directly, journalists launched into a discussion of their newsroom's latest civic journalism project and began describing the different elements they used. For example:

Interviewer: "Do you think civic journalism needs to be designed differently from traditional journalism?"

Journalist: "Well, in our project we had a pool on basically people's attitudes around one of the two counties here." He went on to describe the project before saying, "So we made sure with our graphics to point out who these people were" (Pascale 1998).

It went similarly with another journalist:

Interviewer: "Does public journalism need to be designed differently from other kinds of journalism? What are your thinkings on that?"

Journalist: "Well I think that one of the strong points of public journalism is making a connection with the readers. A strong connection. You kind of show them where home is. Things that matter to them. I think you can do that through very strong images with photography. One of the projects that we worked on; one of the most rewarding projects that we did here was called "Path of a Bullet." That was where we found a case where someone was injured by a drive-by shooting with a bullet. The whole idea was to show the cost of one twenty-two cent bullet. What the cost was to society in general . . ." (Kowalski 1998). She went on to describe how they fulfilled the civic journalism goal of connecting with readers by using photography and graphics.

Another journalist, after first asking for a definition of civic journalism and being told to use whatever definition he and his newsroom used, was asked again if he thought design for civic journalism was different from traditional journalism. He responded: "From a design point of view it seems to me there are a lot more reader reaction or interaction kinds of elements that go into civic journalism. Where the newspaper is trying to generate public response and also a forum for people to voice their opinions so there's an interactive aspect from a design point of view . . ." (Wakely 1999).

A third journalist, after asking for a definition of civic journalism, proceeded to answer whether civic journalism needed to be designed differently by citing one goal of civic journalism and giving an example of how it was achieved visually: "I think you need, for instance, if you're doing a project that outlines some problems or conflict that if you have a sidebar or if you include some information somewhere in a layout that when the reader's finished with the news of it they can go and get help or they can pursue this particular area more in depth. They can do that through help numbers, organizations, that sort of thing. So, I think it's like another level" (Journalist Z 1998).

Are these answers "yes" or "no"? Does acknowledgment of the civic journalism goals of reader response, connection, and involvement, and then linking them to visual elements constitute a belief in the need for different designs for civic journalism? I interpret this as ambivalence on the part of the journalist, whether because of a lack of consensus on the definition of civic journalism, or unsureness about the need for a different type of design, or simply because the journalist hadn't really thought about it much. Such ambivalence was not an uncommon response. One possible explanation for it could be the very lack of discussion about the role of visual communication in civic journalism noted in this study. Perhaps visual journalists have not considered whether design and photography for civic journalism needs to be different from traditional journalism because they didn't realize it was even a question; none of the discussions they've heard or read about civic journalism ever mentioned it. The fast-paced nature and constant deadline pressure of any journalist's job often precludes time for reflection about "lofty" philosophical ideas. However, it is hard to imagine a reporter or editor responding this way to a question about whether civic journalism needed to be reported or written differently from traditional journalism. Despite early efforts to say civic journalism was nothing new, just what good journalists did every day, that line of argument has fallen by the wayside as numerous essays and research studies have proven that it is, indeed different in both philosophy and practice from what has traditionally been done. If civic journalism were truly no different, it seems unlikely that it would have generated such vehement and prolonged opposition.

Even though discussion about how civic journalism differs from traditional journalism is prominent for the written aspects of journalism, such a conversation has not yet reached the visual components of journalism. It is also not surprising that journalists turn to practical examples to answer a question about philosophy; journalists deal with concrete elements of their craft every day and are comfortable talking in those terms. They also subscribe to the dictum "show, don't tell" since that is one of the early lessons every journalist learns in school and the newsroom.

Such descriptive responses could also represent a kind of "working through to a solution," to put it in Yankelovich's (1991) terms, to the question of whether design and photography needs to be different for civic journalism, a kind of thinking out loud. This might also indicate that because visual journalists' role in civic journalism has been ignored in the literature and newsroom discussions, they have not fully considered such implications. Their musings, which seem like ambivalence, might really indicate initial attempts to work through the question in their own minds. Perhaps posing the same question at a later date would generate more conceptual responses.

These accounts may also be interpreted as breaking the larger philosophical question down into individual components. For example, one journalist listed public journalism's goal of showing readers what something means to them and then described how that was achieved visually; another listed the civic journalism goal of eliciting reader response and then told how that was accomplished with visuals; a third described the civic journalism goal of giving readers information they need to get involved, then described how his designs achieved that. It seems they are breaking the philosophical discussion down into more manageable elements, that is the individual, practical goals of civic journalism, to help them think about philosophical questions on a more easy to grasp, item-by-item basis. The larger philosophical questions may eventually be resolved as an emergent process of putting together the parts.

Visual journalists represented many different points on the philosophical continuum, not primarily the middle or ambivalent region. There were clear and emphatic "yes" answers as well as "no's" to the question of whether civic journalism needed to be designed and photographed differently from traditional journalism. Those kinds of answers seemed to come from journalists who had clearly thought about the role of visuals in civic journalism and could talk specifically, and in philosophical terms, about it. For example, one journalist said "I do (think civic journalism needs to be designed differently), but I think the subtleness between the two gets so muddled . . . If it looks like a regular old story we're going to design it that way, but the thought way before the writing and designing process (of civic journalism stories) was the reader's supposed to participate in this. Then we'll definitely take steps to do this in the design" (Wise 1998).

Another journalists said: "I think (design for civic journalism) *does* need to be different," said one journalist who now works at a media think-tank (Moses 1999). "I'm pretty interested in civic journalism because when I was in grad school I read a lot of press criticism that I think civic journalism ultimately addresses, like, you know, it shouldn't just be, campaign coverage shouldn't just be a horserace. And journalists shouldn't just throw stones they should turn up solutions, all those kinds of things civic journalism tries to do. Anyway, I think civic journalism is pretty interesting, but I think what you're doing is really a contribution because nobody as far as I know of is talking about the visual, which of course is the door through which readers enter. So I think it is important to have visual signals that this is a different kind of coverage. And I think that's really a kind of uncovered topic" (Moses 1999).

This kind of account shows not only a well-developed philosophical position, the result of previous working through the problem, but also an awareness of visual journalism's absence from the discussion. This informant went on to explain how this came about for her: "I heard (one of) the big public journalism advocates talk several years ago at the *Charlotte Observer* when I worked there, and he talked all about reaching the community and really getting people interested, particularly in political stories because interest in those things had declined a lot in recent years. And I listened to him for a while and found what he had to say pretty persuasive, and I said to him 'What role,' I asked him a question, I said, 'What role do headlines and visuals play in sort of hooking people and drawing them into these kinds of stories?' And he dismissed it! He said, 'Oh, I don't know anything about that and I don't know that that matters.' I was stunned! Knowing what I know about how people read the newspaper . . ." (Moses 1999). So it was clear that this informant had thought about the issue for several years, and it was her sense of visual journalists being presumed to not have a contribution to make that catalyzed her thinking.

For this journalist, who had clearly thought about the role of visuals in communicating civic journalism's goals, there was one overarching contribution that photography and design could make. That, she said, was "to signal to people that newspapers are changing and becoming more community guardians and so on. It's too easy for people to miss signs of reform if they're in the eighth or tenth graph of stories. You have to give it to them much more conspicuously than that" (Moses 1999). She later elaborated and gave examples of visuals' contribution of signaling change and making civic journalism goals conspicuous. "If there are any town meetings or some occasion at which people can get involved, you want to make that very conspicuous, make it the third or fourth thing people see when they look at a package. Graphics, sidebars, etcetera. Make that information very conspicuous . . . And also conspicuous ways for them to get in touch with candidates . . . we might put in a box that we'd pull out separately . . ." (Moses 1999).

For another visual journalist who had given the question previous thought in a paper she had written for a graduate course, the role of visuals was to "reflect the public and look inviting" (Heath 1998a). Her account sounded like this:

Interviewer: "Do you think public journalism stories need to be designed and photographed differently from traditional stories?"

Journalist: "Yeah, that's the question. It's a big question . . . I keep sort of thinking about that and coming back to it . . . I think it needs to just make it really accessible and look reader friendly and get a lot of the public's faces in there, not just the politicians we see all the time but themselves, the people who are quoted in the story or who call in when we give them topics that we're going to be dealing with and invite them to call in and give their opinion. We should use their faces if we can" (Heath 1998a).

In her paper for a graduate school course, she wrote: "Some designers might argue that designing for public journalism means employing the same good design techniques that would be used for traditional journalism . . . but does this serve the public journalism mission? . . . people need more information to make citizenship decisions and that should outweigh strict adherence to the popular design principles " (Heath 1998b). The paper continues: "A design goal that doesn't change with public journalism is that design serves content. The purpose of content in public journalism is to include all sections of the community, to show participation and to show the resulting change if there is any" (Heath 1998b).

For yet another visual journalist who was quick to answer, yes, civic journalism should look different than traditional journalism, the primary contribution of visuals was to call attention to the differences in civic journalism and involve readers. "You wanted people to pay more attention to that story, not that of course we don't want them to read all of our stories in our newspaper, but because it did involve them more so than some other stories, where you'd want to get reaction and involvement . . . Yes, then definitely (civic journalism stories need to be designed differently). Like I said, more just because I believe that there would be more interest, or you might get more reaction to the piece if they understood that it was a different type of story" (Richmond 1998).

Similarly, the contribution of visuals for one photo editor was in calling attention to differences and putting real people on display. "I think it's for the purpose of putting, maybe laying emphasis on specific things, or trying to get into specific things to put kind of a human face on these projects" (Theno 1999).

Interestingly, three out of the four journalists who responded with emphatic "yes" answers to whether civic journalism should look different than traditional journalism had worked at newspapers that were innovators in the civic journalism movement. Both the *Charlotte Observer* and the *Wisconsin State Journal* were instrumental in early public journalism experiments and had editors or publishers who were considered among the early architects of this new approach. Does length of time experimenting with civic journalism matter in developing one's philosophy about it? Does being exposed to a topic for longer give the person more chance to formulate a well-developed philosophy? In comparing these informants with others, it appears that length of time one is exposed to civic journalism may affect how well-developed one's philosophy is, but it does not appear to be a factor in *what* one's philosophy is. Some of the journalists who were just as emphatic that no, civic journalism should not be designed and photographed differently than traditional journalism, were also at newspapers that were innovators in civic journalism, such as the Norfolk *Virginian-Pilot*. For example, this account from the deputy managing editor for visuals:

Interviewer: "Do you think design for public or civic journalism should be different than for traditional journalism?"

Journalist: "I'm thinking no, I don't think so. I think you always want to design for the content, so if the content was different, the design might have been different . . . we didn't go out of our way to use a different design for that. I think our design is so flexible that we want to let content drive the decisions that we make. So, no, we never had any policy, or I don't even remember any discussions about designing anything differently for civic or public journalism" (Brown 1998).

Echoes the managing editor of the same paper: "No, it shouldn't be (designed and photographed differently). Definitely not. The content should drive the design, so I think we have to start with the nature of the story and that should influence the design. What is the story we're trying to tell? And you try to tell that in basic principles of design, both visually and in the text, and make the two work together. So to us it's invisible . . . Our basic principle is content drives the design, so we have tools in our design toolbox where we can do pros and cons, we can do what's at issue, we can do all kinds of things, but those aren't built for public journalism, they're built really to convey the content of the story" (Hartig 1998).

The interviews with these two journalists at the same newspaper were the first time I had heard the argument *for* a difference in design for civic journalism turned on its head and used *against* it, so I pressed for further understanding:

Interviewer: "Well, I guess we're sort of talking about the same thing, because if you go on the principle, the idea that civic journalism's content is different, then the design will be different accordingly."

Journalist: "Exactly."

Interviewer: "OK, so we're just saying the same thing in two different ways?"

Journalist: "Right" (Hartig 1998).

This journalist elaborated on his perception that civic journalism design was no different from traditional journalism because civic journalism at his newspaper was never a separate entity from traditional journalism. "Our approach has always been from the start that the ideas and principles (of civic journalism) should be applied to the daily work. What everybody else has done is sort of projects, and we've always tried to make it part of the daily work" (Hartig 1998).

All stories, he said, may have "elements that are civic in nature" but no story is civic journalism, *per se*. The other visual journalist at the same paper had said something similar: "It (civic journalism) is being incorporated into all the stories. I'm thinking rather than try to separate it and call it something and say we're doing two different forms of journalism, we're doing quote 'normal' journalism and public journalism, that we thought that was a mistake, and that was divisive and it had people spending more time trying to debate whether we should be doing it or not" (Brown 1998).

This reason for incorporating civic journalism into daily, traditional journalism offered a key insight. The debate over civic journalism has been the most rancorous and divisive the field has seen in decades. It has become so politicized that even the mention of its name seems to result in knee-jerk reactions rather than meaningful dialogue. Its supporters and opponents seem to be as polarized as the two sides on the abortion issue. There is even some evidence that journalists who embrace the philosophies and techniques of civic journalism are shying away from the term because of its politicization (Glasser 1999, Coleman 1997). This may be an example of backing away from a highly politicized *term* while still embracing the goals and philosophies it represents. Further elaboration by the journalist who brought it up confirms that: "We've tried to not make it something different. I mean, the debate around the country is ridiculous about it, just ridiculous. I mean, I don't even want to read about it. If I see a story about debates on public journalism, I don't even want to read about it . . . Instead of trying to figure out what, if anything, was good about public journalism and incorporate that, which is what we did, they want to just argue about whether we should be doing it or not. I think that's just totally a waste of time, it's a waste of everybody's time" (Brown 1998).

The *Orange County Register* is another newspaper that represents this phenomenon of integrating civic journalism into daily practice and not calling it by name. Explains the ombudsman: "The *Register* has been involved for several years in the type of coverage some people would call public or civic journalism and I've been one of the people involved in that coverage, but we don't call it public or civic journalism. We just call it good journalism. Since the early days we've been really resistant to having a label put on our journalism other than to say we work with (Richard) Harwood and are aware of all the good parts of (Jay) Rosen and (Davis "Buzz") Merritt's work and we know what those mean to us translating them into stories. So we do many stories that would probably fit some definition of civic journalism but don't separate it from our regular coverage.

The integration of civic journalism into daily practice has been described by many experts as the signal that civic journalism has accomplished its mission, but this type of integration has a different flavor; it seems to be bound up with denial that civic journalism principles and philosophies are behind some of the ways things are now done in newsrooms. In fact, this conversation with the ombudsman came about as a result of my first having spoken to a photographer who said his newspaper wasn't doing any civic journalism projects. I described the project for which they had received grant money from the Pew Center for Civic Journalism and found he was aware of the project, but said it wasn't civic journalism. This was not the only time I received this particular response from a newsworker. This type of integration of civic journalism into daily newgathering routines, while laudable for its efforts toward the larger goal of integration, seems driven more by a desire to avoid controversy in the newsroom – also understandable since such controversy could seriously disrupt the newsmaking process. The ombudsman at this paper echoed the same sentiments as the earlier newspaper's spokesman: "We don't categorize or ghettoize it or marginalize it in the way some newsrooms have, where it's like there's a special project and some of us are doing civic journalism and the rest of us are doing journalism . . . ultimately the success of civic journalism will be when it loses its name and becomes just the journalism that you do. So that's why we didn't bring it up. Plus, at the time that civic journalism was being talked about in various newsrooms and the trade press, and they're still having trouble with this, it became a red flag for people to attack. So the term became sort of an obstacle to overcome in the minds of journalists" (Foley 1999).

Several journalists were unaware of their civic journalism project's connection to the Pew Center. "If we were involved in that, I think my boss would have told me. I don't remember anything being mentioned." She turned and asked her supervisor about it then said, "He said maybe the ombudsman would know. She's got a direct link to the editor. I'd like to know more about it" (Wise 1998).

A photographer at a Southwestern newspaper was another example of a journalist who did not know that the project was connected to the Pew funding.

Journalist: "I'm not familiar with the Pew project." (I fill him in on the specifics and give him the Pew Center web address). It must be something long term. I haven't gotten word of that yet. (This was a grant awarded a year earlier.) It's probably being talked about at a higher level and hasn't gotten down to the people producing it. Maybe it's a long term project. It sounds kinda like what we just finished up. In the initial stages it sounds like it . . ." (Fox 1999). He was well versed, however, in the principles and practices of civic journalism, and in fact acknowledged that his had been a civic journalism newspaper since its inception as a neighborhood paper three years ago. "You talk about civic journalism as this idea that's out there," he said to me. "I think everybody who signed on at this paper three years ago when we started this paper knew that this was going to be a civic journalism newsroom. It's never been a pie-in-the-sky idea that's out there; it's implicated into our daily work. It's something we do every day. It's just done at a smaller level. Because we are smaller we get more into civic journalism if you want to define civic journalism as getting into community more, breaking it down and getting into neighborhoods talking to people" (Fox 1999).

One journalist also said civic journalism is integrated into their daily work, but his explanation for how that came about was because it's the way they've always worked: "At the time (we did the civic journalism project), we had done civic journalism before and never realized what it was called . . . Twenty years ago I was doing this, and my managing editor called it storefront journalism . . . So this was the same thing, except now it has a new name and there's a foundation that supports it" (Brimeyer 1998). He didn't think that the design of the civic journalism project was treated any differently from any other project: "We did a few devices, which are really not all that uncommon for us to do; clip and mail coupons for readers, encouraging readers to send us e-mail through our website, encourage them to call in to our audio-tech service with questions, comments, issues, opinions, and that sort of thing. But these are things we've done with other stories, so from a design perspective, the civic journalism project really wasn't treated any differently than we'd done anything else" (Brimeyer 1998). Furthermore, this managing editor didn't think design for civic journalism should be any different: "Well, frankly, I think civic journalism is going to work best once it gets mainstreamed with basic American newspaper, everyday journalism. So the best way to mainstream it is to treat it like everything else until it becomes kind of second nature. Real civic involvement and connecting with the community, and I think that's what civic journalism is all about. Rather than us going out and quoting so-called experts, we're out there quoting regular people, and their take on the issues, problems, and solutions" (Brimeyer 1998). He was able to nicely articulate the specific design techniques they employed to convey civic journalism goals such as common ground and solutions, and ways for readers to get involved in the issue.

Only one journalist interviewed claimed not to be doing civic journalism but knew of the project and its Pew funding. He explained that what is now called civic journalism is the way their small, Northwestern paper has always worked:

Journalist: "It's just the way we've done this for a long time, which is covering the issues that people want to read about."

Interviewer: "So, for you there really isn't any difference between civic journalism and what you do every day?"

Journalist: "No, not the way I see it. I don't see a defining line. That's my personal opinion of the paper I work for . . . I don't know, maybe I'm just kind of naive I guess. I don't know."

Interviewer: "I'm sure that there are plenty of papers that never really got away from the mission that civic journalism is trying to bring back."

Journalist: "You know, I guess I'd like to think that that's the way we are. It's hard to tell." (Wright 1998).

For him, the term "civic journalism" seemed to connote advocacy journalism and profit-making motives. He said things like: "I think we take pride in the fact that we're not a bottom-line newspaper that's trying to cull as much profits as possible," and "I don't think any of us are in it for the money," or "I don't think we practice advocacy journalism; our editorial page is a different matter, but I mean, as a newspaper, I don't think we'd ever get involved in something where we'd come out and say" (what to do about an issue). (Wright 1998). Similarly, another journalist connected one of the principles of civic journalism with advocacy. When asked about designing elements to help people get involved with the issues, she said, "We are very clear about our role of not being advocates . . . Our mission is more to lay out the facts, explain an issue as thoroughly as we can . . . then let people decide for themselves what they want to do. . . We're not saying 'You should call Chicago Housing Authority and tell them x, y, or z'" (Tate 2000).

There are some fundamental similarities in the accounts of these journalists, despite the differences in their final answer. The journalists who did not think design or photography for civic journalism was different from traditional journalism did so because they were operating either from the principle of content-driven design, or from the idea that civic journalism was already integrated into the daily work of their newsrooms. They argued that since all content – including the content of civic journalism stories – is different, design and photography are necessarily different for every story. This seems to be a reversal of what others were saying; that because civic journalism is different and content drives design, the different content needs different design. In fact, some journalists who said there was no difference because all design is content-driven, agreed that this was a different way of saying the same thing. The journalists who argued that civic journalism is integrated into their daily work were, by association, also stating that content is the driving force behind the design, not civic journalism.

The practical issues– problems and solutions

Two main problems that seemed to plague the visual display of civic journalism emerged as a pattern in these interviews. For designers, civic journalism generated more "pieces" than traditional journalism, and it was a challenge to incorporate them all in a unified and aesthetically pleasing fashion. For photographers, the tendency for civic journalism stories to be abstract and conceptual made photographing them more difficult.

One designer said: "The only aspect of it that's a challenge is that sometimes the pieces are very small and there are many of them, so it becomes how to sort of ornament the tree with these little items in little callout boxes and sidebars, that sort of thing. You get too many of those, too many different things, and the challenge is how to package those in ways that are coherent" (Wakely 1999). Another said: "We ran as many photos as we could, and sometimes it seemed like, you know, when I look back at pages, well, we did too much. Maybe there was too much going on, and too many photos, and too much . . . I guess most of the time you would say it's a civic journalism story it seems like we do more than we normally would . . . We had lots of different boxes, and things like that . . . it was difficult to do though, I will say that, because there was always, they always wanted so much on the front. We want these boxes on the front because we want the people to know, and there's just never enough space. I mean . . . how do you fit all of that information together ?" (Richmond 1998). A third said: "It was a challenge. The page one designers would complain sometimes because three or four weeks running their centerpiece would be one of these issues pieces, and it had a lot of elements and maybe the art wasn't that great and all that stuff, so yeah . . . It wasn't easy to incorporate all these elements and often the photography wasn't that great . . . you just do the best you could. I think we always did orderly, tidy, presentable stuff" (Moses 1999). Having more "bits and pieces of information" requires that visual and verbal journalists to work together better, said one journalist. "It requires more thinking and more working together between the people who produce the content and who present it. It requires a twist of the brain cells and an approach to the stories that isn't totally word based, necessarily. . . We're so entrenched in our own things, I do this, you do that . . so overcoming that is one of the biggest challenges especially in civic journalism" (Davis 1998).

Photographers also had problems with "too many pieces" because sometimes photos got left out. Explains one: "What tends to happen with these projects is we write like a gazillion words and they say, well we have an open page. Well an open page is 120 inches and if they write 100 inches of stories . . . 20 inches is not worth the effort we spent going to four or five different places finding photographs . . . oftentimes these things have graphics and charts. By the time you add all the packaging elements to these things they get fairly large and consume a fair amount of newshole . . . you may have a couple of graphics and survey data and other research elements that take up editorial space, all those views of real people. It just takes room to do these projects" (Theno 1999).

Nearly all the visual journalists interviewed said the tendency for civic journalism stories to be rather abstract created a problem for photography. Said one photo editor: "Our latest project is 'Schools of Hope,' a thing with the volunteers in the schools. That's been a little trickier because mainly what we've tried to do is show the impact of a shortage of tutors. It's not exactly that visual of a project. The effects of that aren't necessarily visual. They may be, from an educational standpoint, they may show up more in test scores, show up in behavior, achievement, these kinds of things. So these kinds of projects are more of a challenge on one level because you're trying to illustrate that. At best you can go in and maybe show some tutors working with kids but you can't really show what the positive effect of that is . . . it's hard to do that in the same way that if you're talking about a neighborhood that needs a community center because the kids have nothing to do and you're showing kids running around getting into trouble in their neighborhood" (Theno 1999).

And another: "We had a tough time with shooting pictures . . . we ran into a lot of concepts. With the concepts, a lot of things are kind of loose. . . as the project developed and as time passed I mean things started to become more concrete and we had a chance to make some pictures there. I know we did one, we looked at tourism in our area and it was extremely difficult. I mean, I don't know if you've ever been here, it's a nice place to live, but it's a NICE place to live. No point in visiting. So we really didn't have a lot of concrete things to shoot" (Journalist Z 1998).

Said a third: "The project was also kind of hard to illustrate . . . it was a story about community involvement, civic participation, leadership. Why are there school boards where nobody wants to run from half the neighborhoods? Associations in town have nobody running for any offices. And it's kind of hard to show photographically. Well, there really weren't many photographs, and the photographs we had were really a lot of talking heads. We went out and talked to people, but it wasn't real visual" (Brimeyer 1998).

A fourth: "I think it's a real challenge for photographers. I think it's a real challenge. You tend to shoot more people, so I think there's less opportunity for creativity for photographers. More icon photography. How do you illustrate photographically a community's concerns?" (Hartig 1998).

And a fifth: "One of the first things we have to recognize in doing civic journalism is first of all there is a desire to be active, to be engaging. When it comes to photographs, that means we have to have things happening now. We can't photograph the past. We can suggest the past photographically, but that will be an inactive picture, someone looking at the camera or a scene where something happened" (Davis 1998).

Another photographer agreed and described his paper's latest project: "It was very difficult to photograph in the sense that we're talking about the future and trying to illustrate with something today. It's hard to illustrate the future through photographs . . . We took the stuff we could visually show. It's hard to show a council member and what he sees in the future . . . It is harder to take these pictures" (Fox 1999). He went on to tell of an assignment he was to shoot that day. A drag racing strip that was proposed for a certain neighborhood had just been voted down. "I'm struggling today to come up with a visual idea of how to portray that neighborhood," he said. "Probably if the *Dallas Morning News* (a non-public journalism paper) was doing it, they probably wouldn't even send a photographer out" (Fox 1999).

Said another: "I think it takes an extra effort and I think you gotta find the right people. Probably we didn't dig hard enough to find the right people because you do find people whose lives are fairly ordinary in some cases or they might be struggling with something or concerned about the schools or whatever but it's too hard to document visually and you don't, you know, often times these stories have to run every week and you have a limited amount of time to develop these stories photographically" (Moses 1999).

And yet another: "Some of these subjects are pretty tame photographically; people standing in front of houses or getting pictures of people looking at the camera. Not a lot of action" (Wakely 1999).

One graphics editor admitted his paper just didn't take any photographs: "I don't think we actually did photos . . it was really dominated by graphics and the logo. We had kind of a hard time getting an idea of exactly what to do as far as art goes" (Pascale 1998).

Of course, conceptual, issue-oriented stories are not unique to civic journalism, as some of the journalists interviewed pointed out, but it did seem to be more of a pattern with civic journalism, they said. And nearly every journalist interviewed talked at length about it as the main problem with photographing civic journalism stories.

The solution all offered was simple: more time to find the people or subjects to illustrate conceptual issues in a visually interesting and meaningful way. One photographer talked about going back to "enterprise" photos, where photographers explore an area with no preconceived notion of what they'll find in order to see what's out there before making a photo. That clearly takes more time than showing up for an appointment with the photo subjects already assembled.

One problem that was only mentioned in detail by one journalist but seemed to underlie many of the comments was the idea that photography for civic journalism was "not photojournalism." This was particularly a problem with photographing the town hall meetings, public forums, and community conversations that are one of the unique features of civic journalism. "I'm not sure what the value of photographing that is," said one photo editor (Theno 1999). "I know it's still putting a human face on things but in terms of telling people what are these things they're talking about, you would have no idea (from the photo). It's just people sitting in a room . . . you'd have no idea what they're talking about." She elaborated: "There is definitely a school of thinking out there that says 'that's local, community journalism' but it's not photojournalism. Photojournalism is a part of newspapers for a very good reason and that part of it isn't it. Photojournalism is a hand-in-hand companion to the rest of the journalism. We say as much about stories and provide people enough glimpses of daily life in their communities as any other journalism. One of the things we do best is show people how things look and feel" (Theno 1999). Put concisely by another journalist: "You're not going to win any photojournalism awards at this kind of thing" (Journalist Z 1998).

For designers, one design element repeatedly emerged as a solution for how to present in-depth and conceptual issues, as well as a lot of information, in a visually pleasing, easy to understand fashion – the grid. Wrote one designer in a class paper: "Sometimes a traditional story format should be scrapped entirely in favor of a graphic presentation, for instance, a grid with candidate mugs across the top and questions being asked of the candidates down the side" (Heath 1998b). What she described is exactly what many designers have discovered works well. One grid treatment that received much publicity for its novelty was the full-page election grid by the *Charlotte Observer*. Recalls the design editor at the time: "When I was in Charlotte and we were particularly trying to get people interested in issues and what candidates thought about issues as opposed to writing political stories as horse races, we did a series of grids, very very graphic grids, they sort of had a gallery of pictures of candidates across the top and issues down the side and kind of a table of their answers. It said to readers 'it's about issues but it's not hard and it's not dull'," (Moses 1999).

The grid idea seems to work for any complex issue, not just elections. In Virginia, grids were used to make the issue of water supply more approachable. "About three years ago we had a major water issue in this community, a search for a new water source. There was all kinds of city-to-city rivalry and interstate problems with North Carolina. So, finally we had a breakthrough where we did a common ground approach to it. All the cities were in rivalry and had different interests and we had presented them. We'd fragment them, so it would be very hard for the reader to get an understanding of all the interests in relation to one another. We tended to present them as competing interests. So we took a different approach to that. We said, 'OK, let's assume that Chesapeake has a very valid and legitimate interest and that Virginia Beach has a very valid and legitimate interest, and Hampton Roads has a very valid and legitimate interest, etcetera, and that their political actions are an expression of that validity. How can we put all those together so for the first time people can say, 'Oh, if I put myself in the shoes of the apportionment people I can see exactly what their interest is.' So it became a grid" (Hartig 1998).

The same newspaper also did a grid to look like report cards for a story on schools. "Oh my god, the readers love that. Absolutely," said the managing editor. "You reduce a complex issue to its essence in a manner that you've lowered the barrier to entry for people to understand important public issues, instead of having to read a long technical story. The stories are there, but what you've done is expanded the audience because you've made it simpler through design" (Hartig 1998).

Conclusion

The interpretations offered in this paper are solely my own; I realize not everyone will reach the same conclusions, and those different interpretations are equally worthy. Yet, I believe that from many hours spent talking with these visual journalists, some valid conclusions can be drawn. Some of the architects of civic journalism have called for more emphasis on the philosophy and not so much on the practice (Merritt 1997). From these interviews with visual journalists, it would seem to be true that journalists have a good grasp of techniques for fulfilling civic journalism's goals, but are less comfortable with philosophy. However, it also seems from these interviews that journalists equate technique with philosophy. Breaking the philosophical discussion down into smaller, more manageable elements, such as individual goals, helps journalists to think about philosophical questions, but on a more manageable level. For example, many visual journalists drew a blank when asked "Do you think civic journalism needs to be designed and photographed differently from traditional journalism?" but were confident of their answers when asked "How to you visually convey civic journalism's goal of including the concerns of more real people, or of including common ground and solutions, not just conflict?" They can talk easily about exemplars, but philosophy is more difficult.

In addition, the principle of content driving the design and photography is a theory that allows visual journalists to adapt to whatever innovation in newsgathering comes along. Take, for example, investigative reporting and literary journalism. Just as with civic journalism, no one ever discussed how these different writing and reporting techniques affected the work of photographers and designers, yet one can easily imagine how different they must have been. For example, investigative journalism, with its adversarial tone, would no doubt be difficult to photograph. Often sources are reluctant to even allow use of their names, much less photographs. And there is heavy use of documents, written records, and computer data. How would visual journalists reconcile the need for an interesting visual display with these elements? With literary journalism, once called "New Journalism," it logically falls, at least partly, to the photographers and designers to convey that this story is inherently different from "objective" reporting; it uses considerable poetic license in reconstructing dialogue and scenes which the journalist did not witness, and literary devices more common to fiction novels than traditional journalism. Yet visual journalists do adapt to these changes in the industry, and usually without all the discussion that accompanies the changes in the reporting and writing.

When one considers making the news as a production process, visual journalists are at the end of the line. Stories must (usually) be conceived of and written before they are photographed and laid out. Although more and more often designers and photographers are being included from the beginning conceptualization stages, their biggest contribution (in terms of quantity of work, not necessarily quality) comes at the end. Even though newsrooms are acknowledging the contributions of visual journalists in the thinking-through process of story conceptualization, they don't actually produce tangible "products" until later. This assembly line mentality is implicit in the way visual journalists have been left out of the conversation on public journalism. And not just by the verbal journalists, but by the visuals journalists themselves. One journalist interviewed said her newsroom had seminars on civic journalism before launching any projects. Reporters and editors went, she said. In fact, the sessions were well attended. But the visual journalists didn't go. Comp time and even overtime were offered, but still no visual journalists attended. Why was that? "Well, you've got people who are really busy, photographers are often out shooting and a lot of designers have very structured days," she said (Moses 1999). But it wasn't entirely their fault. "It's easy to exclude yourself when you find that what's going to be discussed is mostly reporting and writing and editing issues and not your issues, which, we didn't discuss visual issues at all" (Moses 1999).

Her comments resonate as I struggle with the validity of this line of research. Not validity in the quantitative sense, but in the sense of "Is this really an issue that deserves attention?" I keep coming back to the question, "Why hasn't anyone else done anything on this? Why haven't the photojournalism and design journals for professionals done anything?" But, I am encouraged by the receptivity of the audience; no journalist interviewed dismissed this subject as a non-issue. They all had lengthy and thoughtful comments to make. Many said it was an issue that needed attention and were enthusiastic that someone was addressing it. All expressed interest in seeing the results of the research. Are visual journalists just so used to being left out of conversations that they see nothing unusual in the fact that their roles aren't being considered in relation to civic journalism? One visual journalist railed about the general tendency in the industry to give visuals short shrift: "I do find that visual folks get left out of these conversations typically. And at a certain point it's kind of tough to buck the tide and say 'Wait a second.' I try to do that and I try to encourage other people to do that, but, you know, it's a confrontation to some degree . . . I mean, do the trade magazines talk about us? No. Is visual journalism front and center in most J schools? No. Does ASNE care about us? Does SPJ care about us? No." (Moses 1999).

I hope this work helps change that.

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NOTES

[1] The findings of this study will be rewritten for an audience of practicing visual journalists and published in a monograph. The focus of that publication will be practical, and will display examples of designs and photographs used for public journalism experiments. I hope for this to be a resource for sharing ideas about public journalism and visuals, and solutions to the questions of public journalism germane to the work of visual journalists. All informants who participated in these interviews will be sent a complimentary copy. Other copies will be made available at nominal cost to anyone interested.

[2] This study was limited to newspaper photographers and designers for several practical reasons. First, public journalism has been practiced primarily by newspapers (Hodges 1997; Gade et al. 1998). Second, while broadcast places greater emphasis on visuals, the form, practice, and constraints of broadcast were considered to be so different from print journalism that it would present too much of a confound. For example, broadcast typically cannot devote as much airtime to stories as print journalism can devote space, and broadcast's "moving" pictures present a dramatic contrast to the "still" photos of print. The emphasis on visuals for broadcast is much greater than it is for print, so this would be a profitable area for future study. Such an investigation deserves its own study; it was beyond the scope of this research to cover both print and broadcast in more than a superficial way in one study.

[3] Only one paper on the Pew list was not contacted, *The Bronx Journal*, because the phone number on the Pew list was disconnected, and could not be found it in the *Editor & Publisher* yearbook.

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Civic Journ.
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CITIZEN-BASED REPORTING: A STUDY OF ATTITUDES TOWARD AUDIENCE INTERACTION IN JOURNALISM

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CITIZEN-BASED JOURNALISM: A STUDY OF ATTITUDES TOWARD AUDIENCE INTERACTION IN JOURNALISM

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ARTICLE ABSTRACT

The civic journalism movement and debate of the 1990s focused on the question of whether journalists could objectively report the news and interact with their audience at the same time. Similar questions in other fields have made intellectual interaction, or social constructionism, a practical problem in epistemology, which is the study of knowledge, including truth. The widespread growth of the Internet, the public's preoccupation with interactivity, popular social construction of meaning theories and the convergence of mass media are raising new questions that the traditional communications paradigm does not seem to address adequately. After reviewing the literature on these related movements, this article focuses on the following research questions: 1) What are the attitudes of reporters toward audience interaction? 2) What are the attitudes of news consumers toward audience interaction? 3) What are the news values of reporters and news consumers? 4) Are there any significant demographic attributes of reporters and news consumers?

Q Methodology, intensity rating scales and demographic survey methods are combined in an attempt to answer these questions through media effects research in a centrally located U.S. city with a wide variety of news media organizations. The results of this research describe and compare four types of reporters, four types of news consumers and three types of communicators in the Denver Metro Area. The reporter types are Objective Egalitarians, Independent Existentialists, Experimental Reformers and Solution Facilitators. The consumer types are Information Users, Consensus Builders, Activist Reformers and Problem Solvers. The communicator types, which include reporters and consumers, are Objective Reformers, Solution Finders and Independent Participants. Finally, the results are interpreted in light of the literature review of previous research in the effects of audience interaction on communication, and directions for future research in this area are suggested.

CITIZEN-BASED REPORTING:
A STUDY OF ATTITUDES TOWARD
AUDIENCE INTERACTION IN JOURNALISM

The Internet grew out of a widespread need for scientific intercomputer communication throughout the United States after World War II. The impetus was to enhance national defense in the event of a nuclear attack.[1] As university faculty and government agents began sending human communications through the computer wires, its popularity as a communications medium began to grow. Today, millions of non-technical people are communicating around the globe on the Internet, and traditional newspapers and broadcasters are offering online news services. The following literature review explores some of the ways that the world's first interactive mass medium is affecting the practice of traditional journalism.

Literature Review

Many journalists and investors believe the Internet is an important new mass medium.[2] More than 200 million people are using the Internet, and they are publishing more than 13 million World Wide Web sites.[3] Statistics show traditional media have adopted this new medium: 3,909 magazines, 3,256 newspapers, 2,111 radio stations and 1,283 television stations are online. Unlike broadcasting, however, this electronic medium is based on a standard of the printing press: the printed word. The paper may be gone in this brave new e-world, but the printed word appears vibrantly on video display tubes around the globe. The Internet's World Wide Web technology has added the synergy of multimedia — a combination of colorful pictures, graphics and photography with audio, video and text — to traditional publishing, and, consequently, it is blurring conventional distinctions between newspaper, radio and television. It also has added interactivity — the ability of readers to respond immediately and relatively easily to a news story with corrections, confirmations or other information.

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[1] O'Malley, Chris. "Drowning in the Net: Internet." *Popular Science* 246, no. 6 (June 1995): 78.

[2] Steve Outing, "Online Newspaper Service Directory," *Editor & Publisher Interactive* , 8 December 1995 and 30 October 1998 <http://mediainfo.elpress.com>.

[3] Estimated by InternetStats.Com <http://www.glreach.com/globstats/?%20>, March 25, 2000, *Internet Solutions*, <http://www.netree.com/netbin/internetstats>, Nov. 10, 1997, and *Editor & Publisher Interactive*, 9 November 1997 <http://mediainfo.elpress.com>.

For example, journalists covering the Oklahoma City bombing trial in Denver were able to read official court records, documents and summaries as well as view photos via a Web site created for them.[4] In addition, the San Jose *Mercury News* regularly offers readers more than they get in the printed version of the newspaper by hypertext linking to complete documents, discussion groups and e-mail addresses of appropriate officials, and the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* is connecting readers and reporters by conducting online forums for community groups.[5] These and other examples of the growing use of the Internet by journalists and readers suggest new skills, such as integrating text, images, video and sound, without compromising traditional qualities of writing, editing and design, may help the next generation of journalists find jobs and success.[6] These new skills include handling reporter-audience interaction, establishing hypertext links to related information, dealing with an infinite news hole, understanding the relative staying power of documents and conducting e-mail interviews.[7] Hypertext links enable readers to read more about a news story simply by clicking the mouse arrow on a highlighted word in the text.

Media Convergence

The Internet seems like television in some respects, but it actually represents a convergence of traditional printing and audio-video technology. There are at least four kinds of television today: broadcast or network television, cable television, videocassette television and Internet or digital television. Traditional broadcasting is declining as the other forms of TV are growing and fragmenting the once-gigantic audiences of the original big three networks: ABC, CBS and NBC.

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[4] David Noack, "Press Web Site for Bomb Trial,"*Editor & Publisher,* 3 May 1997, 50.

[5] Wendell Cochran, "Searching for Right Mixture: On-line Newspapers Seek Own Identities to Compete with Ink-Stained Brethren," *Quill,* May 1995, 37.

[6] Carl Sessions Stepp, "The New Journalist (in the online era)," *American Journalism Review* (April 1996): 6.

[7] Randy Reddick, "Promises and Pitfalls for Journalists on the Information Highway," *Quill,* April 1996, 23-26.

> Broadcast television is ... an industry in long-term decline. The erosion in network viewing is probably irreversible. Despite the increase in television-viewing households ... the number of viewers watching prime-time programs declined from 36.9 million in 1975 to 32.7 million in 1990, according to an FCC study. Commenting on the study at the time, the commission's chairman, Alfred Sikes, noted, "The transmission medium that has been dominant is now secondary. ... Broadcasting has been eclipsed by cable.[8]

More and more television viewers are turning to cable programming, rented videocassettes and, most recently, the World Wide Web on the Internet for information about the world. Because none of these many programs are broadcast over the airwaves, the government has little rationale for regulating them. The basis for the Federal Communication Commission's authority has been the concept of "spectrum scarcity," which mandated that the government ensure clear and consistent reception by assigning the limited number of broadcast frequencies to responsible citizens. There is no spectrum scarcity in cable, videocassette or the Internet, however, and cable industry leaders are challenging the courts over the government's right to use the FCC to regulate the newer forms of electronic communications.[9]

Interactivity

Readership of traditional newspapers has been declining, too, and as they go online to protect their franchises, traditional print journalists are joining traditional broadcasters in a new medium that combines the best attributes of print and broadcast media. This has become known as "media convergence." In "The Digitized Newsroom," an *American Journalism Review* article, Philip Moeller presents a case study of the *Raleigh News & Observer's* online news service.[10] Moeller describes in detail how an independent newspaper has embraced electronic multimedia journalism on the Internet by retraining its staff and offering extensive access to local, regional, national and international news.

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[8] Wilson Dizard, "Broadcast Television: Decline or Renewal?" In *Old Media New Media: Mass Communications in the Information Age* (New York: Longman, 1994), 82.

[9] *Turner Broadcasting Sys. v. FCC*, 117 S. Ct., 1174, 1 (1997); *Turner Broadcasting System, Inc. v. Federal Communications Commission*, 114 S. Ct. 2445, 13 (1994); Linda Greenhouse, "Spirited Debate in High Court on Decency Rules for Internet," *The New York Times*, 20 March 1997, 10B.

[10] Philip Moeller, "The Digitized Newsroom," *American Journalism Review* 18, no. 3, (April 1996): 42-47.

Moeller's study suggests several hypotheses. One is that reporters are forging new relationships with computer programmers and librarians. Another is that reporters' interactivity with readers may fundamentally change their relationship. He also makes a strong connection to the civic or public journalism movement that was spurred by editors' reactions to low voter turnouts and election campaigns that focused on images rather than issues:

> The (1990 and '94) elections revealed how unhappy and disconnected voters feel, and the (*Raleigh News & Observer*), in the spirit of "public journalism," wants to foster community participation in the electoral process. (Newsroom Online Editor Bruce) Siceloff says in future campaigns the *N&O* will use its online tools to stimulate communication among voters, government and the press. Beyond interactive discussions, the paper will provide voters online data on candidates and issues, and help them do their own online digging for additional information.[11]

Many advocates of the Internet extol the virtues of interactivity. Articles in *Advertising Age*,[12] *American Journalism Review*,[13] *ComputerWorld*,[14] *Editor & Publisher*[15] and *InfoWorld*[16] define interactivity as conducting experimentation, receiving news tips, participating in two-way communication, practicing democracy and personalizing the news. Sources in these articles indicate the key to interactivity is participation by the audience.

Research in the media effects of audience interaction is sparse. A 1994 project focused on a computer database service that provided online access to appellate court records. The study found that the online service did not significantly alter media coverage of the appellate courts.[17]

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[11] Ibid., 47.

[12] Kim Cleland, "Do Media Staffs Fit in Interactivity?" *Advertising Age* , 24 July 1995, S-16.

[13] Philip Mulivor, "E-mail Whistleblowers," *American Journalism Review* (December 1993): 10.

[14] Esther Dyson, "Interactivity Means 'Active' Participation," *ComputerWorld* , 13 December 1993, 33.

[15] William Webb, "Public Interest Journalism in the Online Era," *Editor & Publisher* , 10 June 1995, 28.

[16] Bob Metcalf, "Get ready for personalized newspapers," *InfoWorld* (April 1993): 52.

[17] Rebekah Bromley, "Journalists assess computer value in covering U.S. courts of appeals," *Newspaper Research Journal* 15, no. 1 (winter 1994): 2-13.

Interviews with the journalists involved in the coverage indicated that providing access to a database — without an increase in news value and reporting time — is not enough to change traditional news coverage.

Old Media New Media: Mass Communications in the Information Age, by Wilson Dizard, Jr., is a well-documented resource for understanding issues surrounding new media. Dizard summarizes many of the problems facing old media as new media develop.[18] He documents the decline in readership of traditional newspapers and broadcast network television, but he presents an "open-ended future" for journalists who make good use of the Internet and other multimedia technology.

"The most far-reaching impact of digitized information will likely stem from its interactivity," Moeller predicts. "Interactivity may fundamentally change the relationship between journalists and the people they cover."[19]

The *Raleigh News and Observer* has taken the bold step of training most of its staff to produce and publish multimedia news on the Internet. The computer is becoming a commonplace ally of reporters, Moeller claims, and readers are using computers and the Internet, too: "They have become active participants in Raleigh's Internet forays."

Electronic Mail

Electronic mail, or "e-mail," is one of the oldest parts of the Internet, and preliminary research indicates it is enabling reporters to communicate with readers in a fast, efficient and inexpensive way. Readers, on the other hand, are discovering interactivity gives them more choice and therefore more control over what they see, hear and read.

Electronic writer-reader interactivity is most easily identified by the forms of e-mail that have evolved from personal communications, community bulletin boards and discussion groups. Interactivity is not new to journalism; traditionally, newspapers have given some control to readers by facilitating the browsing and skimming of information quickly and easily by printing articles on large pages with bold headlines and lead paragraphs that summarize each item. This accommodation of the reader's scanning process is a form of interactivity, Bob Metcalf has argued this point in *InfoWorld:* "It is likely newspapers will become electronic only as interactivity (personalization) can be introduced .... In fact, as newspapers go electronic, the editing function will move toward the reader."[20]

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[18] Dizard, *Old Media New Media* (New York: Longman, 1994).

[19] Moeller, 42-43.

Throughout the 20th Century, as a multitude of traditional news media merged into a monopoly of a few large corporations, traditional news become rather one-directional — from sender to receiver.[21] The Internet, however, is opening new information channels that facilitate immediate feedback from readers direct to writers in the form of e-mail messages. "Interactivity happens when there's genuine activity at both ends of the wire," Internet consultant Esther Dyson explains. "Computers are no longer a calculating device or a display device but a communication device."[22]

Indeed, the most popular online services have found e-mail to be their main selling point. "People talking to each other" accounts for 60 percent of the activity on the Internet, according to Dennis DuBe, who presented his research at a journalism forum in Denver.[23] The Society of Professional Journalists' two-day conference was titled, "The News Biz's Paperless Future: What Every Journalist Needs to Know." He noted this pattern of usage was the same for newspapers, if local news, classified ads and display advertising are considered "people talking to each other." This indicates newspapers and the Internet address the same social function of providing a means for people to talk to each other about current events. They both facilitate public dialogue.

Civic, public and online journalists — sometimes collectively referred to as reader or citizen-based journalists — tend to emphasize interactive communication, and the resulting two-way process is popularly referred to as interactivity,[24] which means action-reaction interdependent relationships.[25] It involves reciprocal sending and receiving of messages, and it has evolved with interactive technology from a simpler concept of feedback.

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[20] Metcalf, 52.

[21] Ben H. Bagdikian, *The Media Monopoly*, 5th ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997).

[22] Dyson, 33.

[23] Dennis DuBe, "Online Newspapers," (a workshop at the 1995 Region IX Conference of the Society of Professional Journalists, 4 March 1995.) See also Jim Rosenberg, "Prototype for a National Info Superhighway," *Editor & Publisher*, 9 October 1993, 34.

Feedback

Feedback is a term developed by mathematician Norbert Wiener in his theory of cybernetics as he worked on automated control systems for antiaircraft guns during World War II.[26] Current cybernetic scholars apply the concept to human communication as conversation theory.[27] The term also was used by communication theorist Wilbur Schramm in *The Process and Effects of Mass Communication*, published in 1954.[28] Schramm said the sender and receiver of a message must share common meanings of a signal for them to understand each other. They reach common meanings through two kinds of feedback: a message from the receiver back to the sender, and a message from the sender's message back as he or she reads his or her own message.

Before the rise of the personal computer spurred popular interest in interactivity, the military's need for anti-aircraft artillery spurred the development of the personal computer.[29] The accuracy of such a weapon requires computing distances, speeds, angles and trajectories, all of which can change during the process. A small, portable computer was needed to make such calculations quickly and constantly in the battlefield.

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[24] Edmund B. Lambeth, Philip E. Meyer and Esther Thorson, eds., *Assessing Public Journalism*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), 23-24, 86-87.

[25] David K. Berlo, "Interaction: The Goal of Interpersonal Communication," in *The Process of Communication* (NY: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, 1960), 109-111.

[26] Howard Frisinger, "Norbert Wiener," *The New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia* [CD-ROM] (Danbury, CT: Grolier Electronic Publishing, 1993).

[27] Paul Pangero, "Cybernetics and Conversation," *Pangero Incorporated*, 4 April 1999 <http://www.pangaro.com/published/cyb-and-con.html>.

[28] Wilbur Schramm, "How Communication Works," reprinted in *Basic Readings in Communication Theory*, ed. C. David Mortenson, (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 28-36.

[29] James Burke, "Printing Transforms Knowledge," in series, *The Day the Universe Changed: A Personal View by James Burke*, prod. by John Lynch, 52 min., BBC-TV and RKO Pictures, 1986, videocassette.

Just as evasive changes in altitude affect the gunner's aim, readers' reactions to texts affect the texts of writers. In both processes, constant feedback is necessary to hit the target. In fact, the quality of human communication has been measured according to the ease with which feedback is obtained.[30] Citizen-based journalists appear to be keenly interested in systematically targeting audiences rather than simply shooting information in their direction.

Scholarly research on human interaction is far from new, but it seems to have been overshadowed in recent decades by reliance upon expert opinion and logical debate in determining meaningful and valid information, also known as truth. From a social-psychological perspective, however, an individual's self identity is the product of the self's symbolic interactions with others. This symbolic-interaction process shapes our beliefs, our facts, our knowledge and our truths. There is no such thing as a self-made person. General semanticists point out that these golden terms — belief, fact, knowledge and truth — are only abstract word-symbols for attributes of our inner selves.

Symbolic Interaction

Human minds do not communicate directly. All communication from one mind to another or a group of minds happens through the socially understood objects of a physical medium, ranging from gestures and signs to words and symbols, to computer images and hypertext.

Thus, all communication — not just communication through the "news media" — is "mediated communication." When two or more minds exchange symbols through a medium, such as language, a two-way interaction of meaning construction — a type of intellectual negotiation — takes place. This symbolic interaction, or alternate sending-and-receiving of symbols, is the root of a developing epistemology called "social construction of meaning," also known as structuralism, semiotics or constructionism. Literary theorist Jonathan Culler explains this view of knowledge — or truth — stresses that meaning, "even when it seems natural or inherent, is always the result of social conventions."[31] This epistemological movement, enhanced by the works of George Herbert Mead, Charles Sanders Peirce, Ferdinand de Saussure and Thomas Kuhn, focuses on the fragile relationship between the sign and what is signified.

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[30] Berlo, 131.

Mead presented seminal ideas about the ability of humans to create symbols in communication and epistemology to his students at the University of Chicago in the 1920s. Though he never published a book-length systematic statement of his theory, four posthumous books bearing his name provide detailed ideas about how human communication differs from the direct stimulus-response communication of animals. Bernard Meltzer summarizes Mead's theory of symbolic interaction:

> The human individual is born into a society characterized by symbolic interaction. The use of significant symbols by those around him enables him to pass from the conversation of gestures — which involves direct unmeaningful response to the overt acts of others — to the occasional taking of the roles of others. Concurrent with role-taking, the self develops, i.e., the capacity to act toward oneself. Action toward oneself comes to take the form of viewing oneself from the standpoint, or perspective, of the generalized other (the composite representative of others, of society, within the individual), which implies defining one's behavior in terms of the expectations of others.
>
> In the process of such viewing of oneself, the individual must carry on symbolic interaction with himself, involving the internal conversation between his impulsive aspect (the "I") and the incorporated perspectives of others (The "Me") ....[32]

Mead compared this interactive process to the reactive process of animals to discount simplistic theories of the human mind that suggest a direct stimulus-response relationship to the physical world. In a footnote explaining the idea of thinking by means of symbols,[33] Mead wrote, "Rational conduct always involves a reflexive reference to self, that is, an indication to the individual of the significance which his actions or gestures have for other individuals." This reflection creates past, present and future points of view that permit the human mind to try various responses in the imagination before selecting one. He calls this process the mind of the individual.[34] Meltzer describes the human mind and the meaning of symbols:

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[31] Jonathan Culler, "Semiotics," *The New Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia* [CD-ROM] (Danbury, CT: Grolier Electronic Publishing, 1993).

[32] Bernard N. Meltzer, "Mead's Social Psychology," in *Symbolic Interaction: A Reader in Social Psychology*, ed. Jerome G. Manis and Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), 19.

[33] George H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), 122.

> The mind, or mental activity, is present in behaviour whenever such a symbolic interaction goes on — whether the individual is merely "thinking" (in the everyday sense of the word) or is also interacting with another individual .... The meaning of an object or event is simply an image of the pattern of action which defines the object or event. That is, the completion in one's imagination of an act, or the mental picture of the actions and experiences symbolized by an object, defines the act or the object.[35]

Meltzer emphasizes that symbolic interaction is both the medium for the development of human beings and the process by which human beings associate as human beings. Thus as early as the turn of the century, Mead was teaching students that the human mind was a dynamic process rather than a static object. Meltzer believes that some of Mead's terms are vague, his theory omits important references to the unconscious, and it does not seem highly researchable, but he also claims Charles Cooley fills in some of these gaps. Cooley suggests that men and women are innately social beings who derive pleasure from sharing common meanings. Despite the fact that the development of the mind is essentially introspective in nature, individuals share their thoughts with one another. To do this, they use external symbols with shared meanings:

> As we perceive and remember sensuous images of gesture, voice and facial expression, so, at the same time, we record the movements of thought and feeling in our consciousness, ascribe similar movements to others, and so gain an insight into their minds. We are not for the most part, reflectively aware of this, but we do it and the result is social knowledge. This process is stimulated and organized by language and — indirectly, through language — by the social heritage of the past. Under the leading of words we interpret our observation, both external and introspective, according to patterns that have been found helpful by our predecessors. When we have come to understand ... words recalling motions of the mind as well as of the body, it shows that we have not only kept a record of our inner life, but have worked up the data into definite conceptions which we can pass on to others by aid of the common symbol.[36]

Cooley's concept of this formation of self as "the looking glass self" is interesting and memorable, but it does little to explain the process. One must remember that Cooley's looking glass is metaphorical, not literal:

> Cooley is widely identified in modern secondary sources as the author of conception of the

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[34] George H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society*, 124.

[35] Ibid.,19.

[36] Charles H. Cooley, "The Roots of Social Knowledge," in Symbolic *Interaction*, ed. Jerome G. Manis and Bernard N. Meltzer (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), 75.

> "looking glass self" — the idea that the raw empirical material for the formation of self consists of reflections provided by others. That Cooley is so closely identified with this conception is testimony to the power of metaphor as the vehicle for memory. While this identification is certainly correct, it seems a particular injustice to Cooley's life work to be so summarily captured in a snippet of a phrase.[37]

Many objects can be symbols. Even the medium can be a symbol. Marshall McLuhan extolled the importance of the medium as a meaningful symbol in his famous claim: "The medium is the message."[38] There is no doubt the medium of a message is part of the message, but the comprehensive symbolic system of language — written or spoken — also is part of the message, and it is rich with socially constructed meanings. The computer as a symbol, therefore, may contribute meaning to computer-mediated messages, but it is never the entire message. Language remains the most comprehensive and powerful medium of meanings.

The Internet is a medium, like television, newspapers, radio, pamphlets, handbills, telephones, films, register receipts, airplane banners and billboards. Each of these media shares the most common symbolic medium created by the human mind: language, either printed or oral. What most distinguishes the Internet from other media is its ability to provide feedback quickly and easily from receivers to senders and foster the mental process of symbolic interaction.

Civic Journalism

To test some new approaches to journalism in 1995, reporters at *The Virginian-Pilot* in Norfolk, Va., learned to conduct and report community conversations as an alternative to polling citizens about public issues.[39] For similar reasons, *The Miami Herald* news staff conducted community conversations as a "systematic way to learn about our readers and to help give our reporters and editors some deeper insight into what truly engages people in the communities we cover."[40] The editors of these papers said the concept grew out of the public journalism philosophy of Davis Merritt, Jr., editor of *The Eagle* in Wichita, Kan. Public journalism is also known as civic journalism.

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[37] Ibid., 44.

[38] Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium is the Massage* (New York: Random House, 1967).

[39] Cole C. Campbell, "Community Discussions Show Value of Listening to Tackle Difficult Issues," *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, 4 June 1995, A2.

[40] Doug Clifton, "Creating a Forum to Help Solve Community Problems," *Miami Herald*, 6 March 1994, 4C.

Merritt published a book in 1995 called *Public Journalism & Public Life: Why Telling the News is Not Enough*, in which he wrote that journalists had a new purpose: "revitalizing a moribund public process."[41] He claimed public life was not going well and that newspapers had a stake in improving it. Without democratic debate of public problems and potential solutions, he argued, there is no need for newspapers.[42] His book urges journalists to make connections to average citizens, and *The Miami Herald*'s community conversations emerged from that goal:

> Citizens are equally moved by stories detailing failures in public education, or health care delivery, or criminal justice. But they need help with the next step. The newspaper that practices public journalism should be able to provide that help, not by dictating a solution, but by facilitating broad, purposeful discourse on the issue, by celebrating victories, by diagnostically noting failures, by encouraging citizen involvement, by outlining and assessing available courses of action.[43]

Even *New York Times Magazine* columnist Max Frankel, who had been an opponent of civic journalism, said he saw a need for publishers to foster discourse, which is "value adding" to information. He said he realized the added value of *The Times* by studying the new interest in digital technology. New technology will enable readers to access information quickly and use it more easily than ever before. Anyone with a home computer and telephone line will have access to information from a wide variety of sources: "Shouting the news no longer sells papers; the news is omnipresent. It's what you do with and around information that counts more and more."[44]

Frankel said he recognized this trend during a presentation by Esther Dyson, "a wise and witty entrepreneur who makes a business out of teaching business to prepare itself for life on the

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[41] Merritt, 83.

[42] Merritt restated these ideas at a Civic Journalism Teach-In sponsored by the Civic Journalism Interest Group of AEJMC and the University of Missouri School of Journalism, 22-23 March 1995. He resisted defining public journalism and called for additional research to determine what it is he and other civic-minded journalists are accomplishing with their new attitudes toward citizens and reporting techniques.

[43] Clifton, "Creating a Forum to Help Solve Community Problems," 4C.

[44] Max Frankel, "Intellectual Popcorn for the Net," *New York Times Magazine*, 21 April 1996, 26.

Internet." She predicts publishers and distributors of intellectual property will increasingly plan their businesses as if basic content were free because it is so plentiful. "They will look for profit in the values that they contrive to add to content."

> An ... important added value, Dyson says, will be the community that content purveyors can provide — an audience of people who will pay not just for the content being offered but to be part of the group that the content attracts. ... One powerful reason for reading *The Times*, for example, has always been the likelihood that your Wall Street broker, your business competitor, your next dinner partner and the President of the United States were also getting their information from the same source. They became a *Times* community. And their interests subtly but firmly shaped the agenda and tone of the news served up to them. ... Good newspapers were crudely "interactive" before they ever printed that word.[45]

Frankel points out an important concept: a community of readers. This is not a term that refers only to book clubs. In the *Times'* case, it is a collection of financial and policy experts who share many of the same status symbols and philosophical meanings. The *Times* has a community of readers throughout the world just like some World Wide Web sites on the Internet, but cyberspace citizens prefer to call them virtual communities. Literary critic Stanley Fish calls them interpretive communities.[46] People who share meanings of symbols form communities and perpetuate their communities by creating even more commonly interpreted symbols. According to this theory, a writer who repeatedly assigns meanings to symbols that are not shared by other writers and readers in his or her community will not have a very big audience.

Methodology

To explore these ideas in primary research conducted in the Denver area, one hundred news reporters and 100 news readers, listeners or viewers were interviewed in highly structured one-hour sessions. The subjects were selected to reflect the known demographics of the six-county Denver Metro Area, and they were asked to respond to statements about audience interaction drawn from literature reviews of the civic journalism debate. Q Methodology, intensity rating scales and demographic survey questionnaires also were used.

Reporters from 21 newspapers, 5 radio stations and 6 TV stations participated in this research.

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[45] Ibid.

[46] Stanley Fish, *Is there a Text in this Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980).

The one-hour sessions were conducted between January and July 1998. An honorarium of $20 was offered to each prospective subject as an incentive to participate. Please see Appendix 1.

The research questions guiding this study follow: 1) What are the attitudes of reporters toward audience interaction? 2) What are the attitudes of news consumers toward audience interaction? 3) What are the news values of reporters and news consumers? 4) Are there any significant demographic attributes of reporters and news consumers?

Each person sample — reporters and consumers — was analyzed separately at first. The subjects sorted an array of 48 statements (Appendix 2) from most agree to most disagree, rated traditional and civic journalism news criteria, and complete a demographic questionnaire. PQMethod software was used to enter the Q-sort data and conduct a factor analysis, using standard varimax rotation, to identify clusters of like-minded subjects. Several solutions were tried by altering the number of factors, and a four-factor solution produced the lowest number of confounded subjects and lowest correlations between factors. Confounded subjects are those who cannot be clearly associated with only one factor. Please see Appendix 3.

Subjects were considered associated with a factor if they had a factor loading of at least .40 absolute value and they did not have a loading on another factor within .10 absolute value, disregarding all values less than .40 absolute value. A factor loading represents a subjects' correlation with a cluster of other subjects. The standard error of a factor loading is computed by dividing 1 by the square root of the number of statements and multiplying by 2.5 or 3.[47] The factor correlations in this study ranged from -.67 to +.77, and some of the correlations were problematically high. The best solutions for reporters and consumers were four-factor solutions, which accounted for more than three-fours of each sample.

To directly compare the Q sorts of reporters and consumers, a second-order Q sort and factor analysis were conducted by entering each statement array for each factor as a subject in PQMethod. Three factors provided the best solution. Factor one and two were highly correlated (.68), but factor three was negatively correlated with one and two. Out of the eight groups entered as subjects, two reporter groups and one consumer group were included in factor one; one reporter group and two consumer groups were included in factor two; and one reporter group and one consumer group were included in factor three.

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[47] Q Methodologists use the higher standard of 2.5 or 3 times the standard error rather than the classic .05 or 1.96 times the standard error to determine the probability of finding a factor loading this high by chance alone.

A spreadsheet program was used to test means between rating scales and demographics of the reporter and consumer types. Responses to the demographic survey and the intensity rating scales were stratified according to each subject's factor type from the Q analysis. These additional data were used to further explicate the types of reporters and news consumers identified by Q Methodology. Analysis of variance was used to test the significance of news criteria and demographic means.

A Q analysis of reporters' attitudes toward interaction in the Denver Metro Area revealed four types of reporters: Objective Egalitarians, Independent Existentialists, Experimental Reformers and Solution Facilitators. A Q analysis of consumers revealed four types of news consumers in the Denver Metro Area: Information Users, Consensus Builders, Activist Reformers and Problem Solvers. A second-order analysis revealed three overall types of communicators, which include reporters and consumers: Objective Reformers, Solution Finders and Independent Participants.

The four reporter factors explain 47 percent of the variance in the sample, with Objective Egalitarians accounting for 12 percent, Independent Existentialists, 12 percent, Experimental Reformers, 14 percent, and Solution Facilitators, 9 percent. The four consumer factors explain 50 percent of the variance in the sample, with Information Users accounting for 14 percent, Consensus Builders, 8 percent, Activist Reformers, 15 percent, and Problem Solvers, 13 percent. The three second-order factors account for 73 percent of the variance in the sample, with Objective Reformers accounting for 22 percent, Solution Finders, 27 percent, and Independent Participants, 24 percent.

Results: Reporters

Objective Egalitarians

Objective Egalitarians (Factor 1, Appendix 4) are interested primarily in factual information. They do not consider themselves members of an elite; they believe the news should be reported and analyzed from the average citizen up rather than the expert down. They like the "window to the world" metaphor, and they believe average citizens are capable of drawing intelligent conclusions from factual information.

Objective Egalitarians do not think they are responsible for making public life go well, but they believe listening to news consumers and facilitating discussion of public issues are important aspects of a socially responsible press.

They do not see the "back to the people" movement as commercially motivated, and they disagree with the statement that reporters do not have time to gather opinions from the audience. They do not see any of these ideas as revolutionary; however, so they do not think a revolutionary change in journalism is needed, nor do they think citizen participation in public life is eroding.

The 20 Objective Egalitarians rated Timeliness (4.75) and Proximity (4.05) as the most important news criteria and Novelty (3.00) and Prominence (2.95) as least important.

Independent Existentialists

Independent Existentialists (Factor 2, Appendix 5) believe freedom of speech is conditional on press performance.

They say the news agenda should be set by the public and reporters should not get involved in influencing community events. They think reporters are responsible for making public life go well, but they haven't adopted social responsibility as a general philosophy.

Independent Existentialists are tied to public life because they think freedom of the press belongs to journalists, but they do not see themselves as powerful problem solvers who present "windows to the world" or provide shared information and a place for discussion of public issues. They reject the idea that reporters should provide forums for dialogue.

The 12 Independent Existentialists rated Proximity (4.25) and Timeliness (4.17) as the most important news criteria and Novelty (2.83) and Prominence (2.58) as least important.

Experimental Reformers

Experimental Reformers (Factor 3, Appendix 6) are reporters who want to change the profession.

Experimental Reformers believe freedom of speech is conditional, and they think reporters have failed to live up to their responsibilities as citizen participation in public life has eroded. They say reporters are responsible for public life going well, and they want to let the public set the news agenda.

Experimental Reformers believe reporters should help citizens solve problems, but they don't think sharing information and facilitating discussions are the ways to do it. They say members of the audience are not capable of intelligent judgment on their own; the audience needs reporters who support news events as they report and analyze them.

The 20 Experimental Reformers rated Timeliness (4.50) and Impact (4.20) as the most important news criteria and Interaction (3.00) and Collaboration (2.70) as least important.

Solution Facilitators

Solution Facilitators (Factor 4, Appendix 7) believe freedom of expression is conditional on press performance, but their focus is on assisting the community solve its problems rather than serving as watchdogs or presenting "windows to the world." These reporters believe they affect public life and that they should practice leadership in their communities to enrich civic life.

Solution Facilitators do not think reporters should limit their work to reporting and analyzing factual information. They believe they should get citizens involved in public life, help fix what's wrong in the community and mobilize support for public projects.

Solution Facilitators say they don't believe that democracy requires shared information and a means to discuss it. They believe their work leads to problem solving, fixing what's wrong and enriching public life, but they don't believe preserving democracy is part of their job. Their work facilitates problem solving and public discussion, but it is qualified by professional detachment from outcomes.

The 16 Solution Facilitators rated Timeliness (4.38) and Impact (4.13) as the most important news criteria and Collaboration (2.81), Values (2.81) and Interaction (2.75) as least important.

Differences Between Reporter Types

Objective Egalitarians are more concerned about social responsibility, shared information and discussion than are Independent Existentialists, who are more concerned about press performance and making sure public life goes well. Objective Egalitarians believe freedom of the press is for everyone, while Independent Existentialists believe reporters are members of an elite.

Objective Egalitarians think reporters should not solve problems but just reveal them for public discussion by citizens, who generally are capable of intelligent judgment. Experimental Reformers, on the other hand, believe reporters primarily are responsible for making public life go well.

Objective Egalitarians say reporters should report and analyze current events to present factual information to the public. This attitude contrasts with Solution Facilitators, who say reporters should try to bring people together to help solve problems.

Independent Existentialists differ from Experimental Reformers in at least two ways: The former are more detached, and they think relying on citizens to set the news agenda is lazy journalism. The latter think reporters are more powerful than they acknowledge and the profession needs a stronger guiding philosophy of social responsibility.

Independent Existentialists react strongly against mobilizing public support for projects and subsidizing or promoting news events. This distinguishes them from Solution Facilitators, who believe reporters have a social responsibility to help citizens enrich civic life by helping them solve problems.

Experimental Reformers are concerned that the news media agenda often does not match the public's agenda, that the news often presents extreme positions and that these are causes for the decline in news audiences. Solution Facilitators are more interested in sharing information and public discussion in order to help citizens solve problems, and they believe declining readership has been exaggerated.

All four types of Denver Metro Area reporters generally shared some important attitudes: They do not see themselves as society's watchdogs, and they say the news agenda should be based on the public's agenda — reporting should be from the average citizen up.

Regarding statistically significant differences ($p<.05$) in news criteria ratings, Objective Egalitarians rated Collaboration higher than Experimental Reformers. This means Objective Egalitarians are more interested in facilitating cooperative problem-solving.

Concerning demographics, Solution Facilitators have lived longer in the Denver Metro Area than Objective Egalitarians.

Results: Consumers

Information Users

Information Users (Factor 1, Appendix 8) are news consumers who believe the First Amendment is for all citizens, not just for journalists.

They want reporters to present factual information by reporting and analyzing the news, but they say reporters are not responsible for public life going well, they are not members of an elite, nor are they leaders who must be concerned about enriching public life.

Information Users think freedom of the press is not conditional on press performance. They do, however, believe reporters need a stronger guiding philosophy based on social responsibility.

Information Users are interested in shared information and public discussion, but they don't think reporters are responsible for fixing what's wrong with society or for getting people involved by bringing them together to solve problems.

The 18 Information Users rated Timeliness (4.72), Impact (4.00) and Proximity (4.00) as the most important news criteria and Novelty (2.56) and Action (2.56) as least important.

Consensus Builders

Consensus Builders (Factor 2, Appendix 9) reject the idea that the First Amendment is conditional and only for journalists.

They are interested in forums, surveys and town meetings because they believe the average citizen is capable of intelligent judgment. Consensus Builders like the "windows to the world" metaphor, and they do not believe reporters are responsible for public life going well.

They think shared information and discussion are important to democracy and social responsibility, but they say reporters should stick to reporting and analyzing the news, not solving problems. They say reporters should not mobilize public support, subsidize news events or follow the public's agenda.

The 18 Consensus Builders rated Timeliness (4.22) and Conflict (3.72) as the most important news criteria and Interaction (3.11) and Prominence (3.11) as least important.

Activist Reformers

Activist Reformers (Factor 3, Appendix 10) are news consumers who believe reporters are responsible for public life going well.

Activist Reformers believe reporters should have a good understanding of what it's like to be a member of a minority. They think reporters need to change to a new kind of journalism because reporters too often present public life as a depressing spectacle.

They think reporters should not stop at reporting and analyzing the news; they should get people involved in solving problems. Freedom of the press is for journalists alone, they say, and this freedom depends on their performance. Finally, Activist Reformers believe reporters should not present "windows to the world" or use opinion polls; they should try to fix what's wrong in the community.

The 22 Activist Reformers rated Timeliness (4.68) and Consequences (4.05) as the most important news criteria and Interaction (3.18) and Novelty (2.82) as least important.

Problem Solvers

Problem Solvers (Factor 4, Appendix 11) say reporters should help enrich civic life.

These consumers say reporters should not stop at reporting and analyzing factual information, acting as watchdogs, presenting"windows to the world" and getting involved in community events. They believe reporters should help citizens confront and solve problems by bringing them together, understanding minorities and being socially responsible.

Problem Solvers believe reporters should follow the public's agenda and then lead the community toward solving its problems. These consumers say reporters' responsibility is first and foremost to themselves, however, and freedom of the press is conditional on their performance.

The 10 Problem Solvers rated Timeliness (4.40) and Impact (3.70) as the most important news criteria and Values (3.00) and Interaction (2.20) as least important.

Differences Between Consumer Types

While Information Users think reporters should provide just factual information, Consensus Builders think reporters should help citizens confront and solve problems. The former say reporters should not mobilize support, teach the audience or subsidize news events, while the latter say reporters should present "windows to the world" by sponsoring forums, town meetings and surveys.

While Information Users believe a reporter's mission is to report and analyze, Activist Reformers believe reporters are responsible for making public life go well. Information Users say freedom of the press belongs to all citizens, and it's the responsibility of reporters to get people involved in the news. Activist Reformers, on the other hand, don't want reporters getting involved in the news because they are members of an elite.

Information Users believe a reporter's central mission is to report and analyze the news to present factual information, but Problem Solvers say reporters should bring people together to solve problems according to the public's agenda. The former say freedom of the press is for everyone, but the reporter's role is to reveal problems rather than solve them. The latter say reporters are responsible for public life going well and that freedom of the press depends on press performance

Consensus Builders think reporters should report and analyze the news. They think freedom of the press is for all and democracy requires shared information and discussion. A reporters' job, according to Consensus Builders, is to reveal problems — not to solve them. Activist Reformers, on the other hand, say reporters are responsible for public life going well, but reporters don't have any business getting directly involved in the news. Freedom of the press is conditional on reporters' performance, they say, and reporters belong to an elite.

Consensus Builders say reporters' central mission is to report and analyze the news as they present "windows to the world." Freedom of the press is for all, they believe, and democracy requires shared information and discussion. Problem Solvers believe reporters are responsible for public life going well, but they don't think reporters have any business getting involved in community activities. Freedom of the press is conditional on the performance of reporters, who are members of an elite group, according to Problem Solvers.

Activist Reformers think citizen participation in public life is eroding and a new kind of journalism is needed to refocus political debate. Reporters too often present public life as a depressing spectacle, they say, and reporters need to change the way they work. They are different from Problems Solvers, who believe opinion polls, forums, town meetings and surveys are good ways to find out what citizens think.

News consumers in general do not see reporters as watchdogs, and they do not want reporters mobilizing support for public projects. They think reporters need a stronger guiding philosophy, however, but they offer conflicting opinions about what that philosophy might be.

Concerning statistically significant differences ($p<.05$) in news criteria ratings, Activist Reformers rated Action higher than Information Users. Activist Reformers also rated Consequences higher than Consensus Builders. This means Activist Reformers are more concerned that news should present choices of responsive actions to the public and that the news should present consequences of various actions.

Information Users rated Proximity higher than Consensus Builders. This means Information Users are more concerned about news that takes place close to home.

Consensus Builders rated Interaction higher than any other type of consumer. They are most interested in reporting that includes feedback from the audience. They also rated Timeliness and Conflict lowest of all types. This means Consensus Builders are least concerned about breaking news and news that presents two opposing factions.

There were no statistically significant demographic differences between consumer types.

Results: Communicators

A second-order Q analysis was conducted to see whether reporter and consumer types were related. The eight original types were factor analyzed together by treating each Q array for each type as if it were a Q sort. This analysis produced three factors. Each factor contained some reporters and some consumers, so these were called "communicator types."

Objective Reformers

Objective Reformers (Factor 1, Appendix 12) are communicators who believe reporters are responsible for public life, are members of an elite and should try to fix what's wrong with society. They believe the news audience is not intelligent enough to reach sound conclusions on its own, especially when the press presents public life as a depressing spectacle. This group consists of Objective Egalitarians (reporters), Experimental Reformers (reporters) and Activist Reformers (consumers).

The 62 Objective Reformers reject the "windows to the world" metaphor, believe freedom of the press is for everyone and think reporters have failed in their responsibilities to inform citizens about the challenges around them. Change is needed, they say, and reporters should get people more involved in public affairs.

Solution Finders

Solution Finders (Factor 2, Appendix 13) believe reporters make up an elite group responsible for public life, but they say reporters' first responsibility is to themselves and that freedom of the press depends on their performance. Solution Finders say leadership is important as reporters bring citizens together to confront and solve public issues. This groups consists of Solution Facilitators (reporters), Information Users (consumers) and Problem Solvers (consumers).

The 44 Solution Finders reject the watchdog role of reporters and the idea that reporters should only report and analyze factual information. Shared information and discussion are important to democracy, they say, and freedom of the press is not just for reporters.

Independent Participants

Independent Participants (Factor 3, Appendix 14) believe democracy requires shared information and discussion of public issues. They think forums, town meetings and surveys are good reporting tools, but they believe reporters should only reveal problems, not try to solve them. This group consists of Independent Existentialists (reporters) and Consensus Builders (consumers).

The 30 Independent Participants think reporters should get involved in the community, subsidize news events and mobilize support for public projects, but they don't hold reporters responsible for public life going well or setting a news agenda based on the public's agenda. Reporters are not members of an elite, according to Independent Participants, and freedom of the press does not depend on their performance.

Differences Between Communicator Types

The difference between Objective Reformers and Solution Finders is that the former believe a new kind of factual reporting is needed to avoid presenting public life as a depressing spectacle, while the latter believe a reporter's responsibility is first and foremost to himself. Objective Reformers think citizen participation in public life is eroding and reporters should get citizens more involved; Solution Finders, on the other hand, oppose having reporters conduct forums, town meetings, surveys and opinion polls.

Objective Reformers believe reporters are responsible for making public life go well and freedom of the press depends on their performance. Independent Participants, on the other hand, believe freedom of the press is for everyone and reporters should focus on revealing problems — not solving them.

Solution Finders think reporters are responsible for public life going well and freedom of the press depends on their performance, but Solution Finders don't think reporters should get involved in community activities. Reporters are members of an elite group, they say, and reporters should set an agenda based on the public's agenda, but their primary responsibility is to themselves. Independent Participants say a reporter's central mission is to report, analyze and reveal problems but not to solve them. Reporters should present "windows to the world," according to Independent Participants, but they also should try to get people more involved in public affairs.

All the Denver Metro Area news communicator types agreed to some extent on a few ideas: Mobilizing support for projects is part of a reporter's job. So is fixing what's wrong. Reporters should do more than report factual information; they should get people involved. Finally, they are not comfortable with the watchdog image of the reporter.

Independent Participants rated Collaboration higher than Solution Finders. This means Solution Finders are less interested in facilitating cooperative problem-solving. Solution Finders rated Action and Values lower than Independent Participants. Solution Finders also rated Interaction lowest of all types of communicators. This means Solution Finders have less interest in having reporters present choices of responsive actions, include feedback from the audience and explain underlying values of courses of action.

The Objective Reformers group consists of more reporters than the Solution Finders, but

Solution Finders have lived in the Denver Metro Area longer than either of the other groups.

Conclusions

This study explored attitudes of news reporters and news consumers in a centrally located American city toward audience interaction. It also attempted to identify news values and demographic attributes for several types of reporters and consumers. Q Methodology was employed as a systematic method to discover hypotheses. Research questions were used to guide the project and unify the interpretations and conclusions. The remainder of this paper reviews the four research questions, evaluates the use of Q Methodology in media effects research and makes suggestions for future research in audience analysis.

In the Q analyses, the high correlations between some of the reporter and news consumer factors suggest that the subjects generally agree about what the issues are concerning audience interaction even if they have opposing opinions about them. This was reinforced in the second-order analysis that included both reporters and consumers. In fact, every second-order factor had some reporters and some consumers, clearly showing that attitudes toward audience interaction are not divided by the roles of reporter or consumer. These results suggest the stark division over audience interaction issues as reported in previous journalism research and media criticism has been exaggerated, at least in the case of the Denver Metro Area reporters and consumers.

1. What are the attitudes of reporters toward audience interaction?

Q Methodology identified four types of reporters in the Denver Metro Area. The high correlation between Experimental Reformers and Solution Facilitators (.77) suggests a high level of agreement between them. Independent Existentialists correlated with Experimental Reformers at .59 and with Solution Facilitators at .48. All other correlations were negative. These types of correlations suggest that Denver area reporters agree about what the issues are concerning audience interaction even if they have opposing opinions about them.

The solution of four factors, however, identifies some differences among professional journalists. Based on numbers of subjects and percentages of variance, Objective Egalitarians and Experimental Reformers are the two strongest factors in the Denver Metro Area. Objective

Egalitarians highly value the traditional conventions of reporting and analyzing factual information, but they also believe average citizens play an important role in the news process, and they believe listening to news consumers and facilitating discussion of public issues are important aspects of a socially responsible press. They do not consider themselves members of an elite, however, and they believe average citizens are capable of reaching intelligent decisions. Objective Egalitarians consisted of 20 reporters and accounted for 14 percent of the total variance in the sample.

Experimental Reformers see a need to experiment and change the profession. They believe reporters should get people more involved in the community and help them make intelligent judgments and rational choices about public issues. This group consisted of 20 reporters and accounted for 15 percent of the variance.

Independent Existentialists fell closest to the civic journalists' common stereotype that described many reporters as isolated and detached from the audience, but in this study, they consisted of only 12 reporters and accounted for only 8 percent of the variance. Solution Facilitators, the group most closely matching the traditionalists' stereotype of civic journalists as advocating solutions to problems, consisted of 16 reporters and accounted for 13 percent of the variance. These results indicate the heated debate over civic journalism has been mostly between two small subsets of the profession, but they also suggest the journalism profession may be more pluralistic than it often is characterized.

Objective Egalitarians and Solution Facilitators are moderately interested in interaction but for different reasons. The former seem to want feedback to help determine the nature of news; the latter want collaboration in fixing what's wrong with the community. Independent Existentialists prefer to remain generally detached from the audience, while Experimental Reformers are very interested in trying various kinds of audience interaction.

2. What are the attitudes of news consumers toward interaction?

The results of the consumer analysis were similar to the reporter analysis. Again, some correlations were high, but they were low enough to distinguish differences among the types. Information Users correlated with Consensus Builders at .66, and Activist Reformers correlated with Problem Solvers at .53. All other correlations were negative. These types of correlations suggest that Denver area news consumers agree about what the issues are concerning audience interaction even if they have opposing opinions about them.

Based on numbers of subjects and percentages of variance, three factors emerged as the strongest: Information Users (18, 12), Consensus Builders (18, 12) and Activist Reformers (22, 14). Problem Solvers consisted of only 10 subjects and accounted for only 9 percent of the total variance. Very little research has been conducted to find out how news consumers perceive civic journalism, and these results suggest consumers have about as many opinions about audience interaction as journalists do.

Information Users value traditional news conventions designed to provide objective, factual information, but they do not see journalists as members of an elite, and they think reporters should be concerned about enriching public life. In other words, Information Users believe reporters should be socially responsible by providing objective information to the public.

Independent Citizens think public forums, surveys and town meetings are good reporting tools; Public Activists think reporters should get people involved in the community; and Problem Solvers want reporters to help lead the community toward solving its problems, but none of them want reporters to tell them what to do. All the news consumer types want reliable, accurate and factual information, staples of the traditionalist.

The Denver Metro Area news consumers have various attitudes toward audience interaction. Information Users and Problem Solvers are moderately interested in interaction, but — like the reporters — for different reasons. Complementary to the Objective Egalitarian reporters, Information User consumers believe feedback should help determine the nature of the news; complementary to the Solution Facilitator reporters, Problem Solver consumers believe journalism should help fix what's wrong with society. Consensus Builder consumers are most interested in interaction, and Activist Reformer consumers are least interested in it. This clearly indicates that consumers do not believe audience interaction is a tool of activism, which seems to contradict many traditionalists' complaint that civic journalism is a form of activism.

3. What are the news values of reporters and news consumers?

The news criteria rating scales did not detect many statistically significant differences between factors. There were some interesting findings, however. For example, Objective Egalitarian reporters rated collaboration higher than the Experimental Reformers. This means one of the strongest reporter types in the Denver Metro Area believes in interactive cooperative problem solving. This is a social constructionist point of view.

Independent Citizens rated interaction higher than any of the other types of consumers. This same group believes the main functions of reporters are to report and analyze the news. These consumers do not see a contradiction between social interaction and independence of thought. This, too, is a social constructionist point of view.

Some reporters and consumers do believe in activism. The Solution Finders rated interaction lowest of all types of communicators in the second-order analysis. In other words, these communicators are more interested in solving problems than discussing them. This certainly is not a social constructionist viewpoint, nor does it square well with providing objective, factual information in the news. Activism, or partisanship, is an old philosophy of journalism that is usually associated with colonial and early American journalism. It still exists to some extent.

4. Are there any significant demographic attributes of reporters and news consumers?

Not many of the demographic results helped define the types of reporters and news consumers in the Denver Metro Area, but again, a few did add insight to the findings. For example, Solution Facilitators have lived significantly longer in the Denver area than Objective Egalitarians. This suggests the longer a reporter remains in a community, the more likely he or she is to become concerned about solving community problems.

Differences between consumer types had little to do with demographics, but the second-order Objective Reformers consisted more of reporters than did the Solution Finders, and Solution Finders have lived in the Denver area the longest of all communicators. Various attitudes toward audience interaction apparently cut across race, education, gender and ethnic boundaries.

In general, Denver Metro Area reporters say they prefer traditional (20), community (17) and investigative (14) journalism, but there is no evidence in this study's findings to indicate these are well-defined terms. The same goes for the news consumers, who say they prefer traditional (21), investigative (20) and public (12) journalism. This is consistent with previous research that found much confusion as to what the term "civic journalism" actually meant.[48]

While many of the differences in news criteria ratings were not statistically significant, it is interesting to note that all of the reporters and consumers rated Timeliness (4.48) and Impact (3.94) the highest. They also rated Novelty (2.94) the lowest. While the overall mean of 3.28 for the civic journalism news criteria (Collaboration, Action, Interaction, Values, Consequences and Stakeholders) was lower than the overall mean of 3.64 for the traditional news criteria (Impact, Proximity, Timeliness, Prominence, Novelty and Conflict), none of the news criteria was rejected outright. This supports many civic journalists claims that their approach to journalism does not conflict with tradition but rather complements or expands it.

Finally, the reporters were remarkably consistent in estimating the time they spend with other journalists, sources and news consumers, but the means did not help distinguish between factors. Overall, reporters said they spent daily about 5.5 hours with other journalists, 5 hours with news sources and 4 hours with news consumers.

One goal of this research has been to contribute knowledge of why reporters should — and how they can — exchange information with their audience members without pandering to them. The conclusions presented here are consistent with well-established theories of social psychology that describe symbolic interaction as an interactive intellectual process for determining truth and self-identity. People construct truth from many sources and experiences. They do not receive truth from the news media; they participate in creating it.

Another potential outcome of this research is that more journalism educators will include audience analysis as a basic component of news writing to narrow the gap between what citizens say they want and what journalists think they want. For example, the common statement, "We publish sensational news because that's what people want," should only be acceptable after valid audience analysis research has been conducted. Otherwise, it is simply a knee-jerk response based on conventions that may no longer be true.

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[48] Gade et al., 24.

APPENDIX 1: PERSON SAMPLE

	Reporters		**Consumers**	
	Quota	Actual	Quota	Actual
Caucasian Race:	75	83	75	84
Hispanic:	12	4	12	8
African-American:	5	7	5	4
Native American:	4	3	4	4
Asian American:	4	3	4	0
Jefferson County:	4	4	23	23
Adams:	5	5	14	14
Arapahoe:	4	5	22	22
Denver:	61	64	24	24
Boulder:	21	21	12	12
Douglas:	5	5	5	5
Male:	50	60	50	52
Female:	50	40	50	48
Newspaper:	59	64	44	43
Television:	29	22	44	43
Radio:	8	10	8	11
Online:	4	4	4	3
18-29 years old:	20	18	20	15
30-39:	20	40	20	25
40-49	20	29	20	35
50-59	20	12	20	11
60-69	20	1	20	14

APPENDIX 2: Q SAMPLE

1. Reporters should present "windows to the world" to point out issues and problems for scrutiny.
2. I feel more comfortable when reporters serve as "society's watchdogs" over institutions than when they take active roles in solving social problems.
3. I think reporters are citizens first and journalists second.
4. Mobilizing support for public projects is not the business of reporters.
5. Reporters should work to improve the way in which they participate in politics instead of denying that such participation exists.
6. I don't think reporters have any business getting involved in community activities.
7. A reporter's central mission is to report and analyze the news, not to shape it or direct outcomes.
8. I think reporters need to distance themselves from the politicians and government leaders and get closer to their audience.
9. Freedom of the press is not the property of journalists alone. It belongs to the people.
10. I think reporters should provide just factual information and let the audience decide where the truth is.
11. A role of reporters is to create forums for dialogue.
12. I think reporters should bring people together to help solve society's problems.
13. A reporter's job is not so much solving social problems as revealing them.
14. A reporter's responsibility isn't to fix what's wrong with the community.
15. Reporters should help their audience confront and solve issues and work toward public judgment.
16. Democracy requires shared information and a means to discuss it.
17. Reporters often don't have time to gather opinions from the community.
18. Reporters are too powerful to pretend they have nothing to do with social well-being.
19. Freedom of the press is a conditional freedom that should be evaluated based on reporters' performance.
20. Reporters are integral members of an elite.
21. I believe the reporter's role is to help enrich the civic life of the community.
22. The responsibility of a reporter first and foremost is to himself or herself and the ideals he or she feels constitute ethical journalism practice.
23. It's not reporters' responsibility to get people to participate in public discourse but to provide information so the audience can do so.
24. Reporters have failed in living up to their responsibilities to inform their audience about challenges around them.
25. Community forums, town meetings and opinion surveys are tools reporters should use regularly.
26. A reporter who avoids covering conflict will not succeed in journalism.
27. I dislike the idea of having reporters teach everybody.
28. Most Americans do not see their views and interests represented in the news.
29. I think citizen participation in public life is eroding and that reporters' practices are part of the problem.
30. I believe that reporters need to change the way they do journalism if democracy is to survive.
31. Reporters tend to present extreme positions rather than seek common ground.
32. Good reporters have always listened to their audience.
33. The problems with reporters today lie in their practices, not their principles.
34. Reporters are in need of a stronger guiding moral or ethical philosophy.
35. It is reporters' responsibility to make sure public life goes well.
36. I think reporters too often present public life as a depressing spectacle rather than a vital activity in which their audience can and should be engaged.
37. Reporters' potential to contribute to the general welfare of society carries a corresponding social responsibility.
38. A new kind of news coverage is needed to refocus the political debate.
39. Reporters should set a news agenda based on the public's demands.
40. Reporters should cover news from the average citizen up, not from the expert down.
41. Members of the news audience are capable of intelligent judgment, mature understanding and rational choice if given the opportunity.
42. The impact of declining readership of newspapers has been greatly exaggerated.
43. I think it's lazy journalism when reporters rely on citizen groups to tell them what to write about.
44. I think opinion polls are a good way to find out what people think.
45. Reporters need to develop a sense of what it's like to be poor and a member of a minority group that is severely discriminated against.
46. The need to "get back to the people" trend of some reporters amounts to little more than a commercial response to declining market penetration.
47. Subsidizing and promoting events to get the news audience involved in civic affairs is not the job of reporters.
48. Journalism teachers should teach their students to exert leadership in public service.

Types of News Reporters, Consumers and Communicators in Denver

Reporters

Factor 1	Objective Egalitarians
Factor 2	Independent Existentialists
Factor 3	Experimental Reformers
Factor 4	Solution Facilitators

Correlations Between Factors for Reporters:

	1	2	3	4
1	1.0000	-.5882	-.6736	-.6609
2	-.5882	1.0000	.5891	.4828
3	-.6736	.5891	1.0000	.7670
4	-.6609	.4828	.7670	1.0000

Consumers

Factor 1	Information Users
Factor 2	Consensus Builders
Factor 3	Activist Reformers
Factor 4	Problem Solvers

Correlations Between Factors for Consumers:

	1	2	3	4
1	1.0000	.6555	-.5677	-.6593
2	.6555	1.0000	-.6315	-.4539
3	-.5677	-.6315	1.0000	.5297
4	-.6593	-.4539	.5297	1.0000

Communicators

Factor 1	Objective Reformers
Factor 2	Solution Finders
Factor 3	Independent Participants

Correlations Between Factors for Communicators:

	1	2	3
1	1.0000	.6798	-.6662
2	.6798	1.0000	-.5342
3	-.6662	-.5342	1.0000

APPENDIX 4: NORMALIZED FACTOR SCORES FOR OBJECTIVE EGALITARIANS

No.	Statement	Z-SCORES
10	I think reporters should provide just factual information.	2.031
7	A reporter's central mission is to report and analyze.	1.796
40	Reporters should cover news from the average citizen up.	1.668
13	A reporter's job is not solving but revealing problems.	1.640
32	Good reporters have always listened to their audience.	1.610
41	Members of the audience are capable of intelligent judgment.	1.476
23	It's not reporters' responsibility to get people involved.	1.385
16	Democracy requires shared information and discussion.	1.114
9	Freedom of the press is not the property of journalists.	1.082
1	Reporters should present "windows to the world."	1.048
37	Reporters' potential power carries social responsibility.	1.002
26	A reporter who avoids covering conflict will not succeed.	.656
34	Reporters are in need of a stronger guiding philosophy.	.525
14	A reporter's responsibility isn't to fix what's wrong.	.482
3	I think reporters are citizens first and journalists second.	.371
2	I feel more comfortable when reporters serve as watchdogs.	.278
21	I believe the reporter's role is to help enrich civic life.	.247
44	Opinion polls are a good way to find out what people think.	.244
8	Reporters need to distance themselves from politicians.	.217
25	Forums, town meetings and surveys are good reporting tools.	.216
11	A role of reporters is to create forums for dialogue.	-.001
4	Mobilizing support for projects is not a reporter's job.	-.044
38	A new kind of news coverage is needed to refocus politics.	-.085
47	Subsidizing and promoting events is not a job of reporters.	-.138
42	The impact of declining readership has been exaggerated.	-.196
15	Reporters should help audiences confront and solve issues.	-.237
33	The problems with reporters today lie in their practices.	-.245
48	Journalism teachers should teach their students leadership.	-.264
43	It's lazy journalism when reporters rely on citizens.	-.269
22	The responsibility of a reporter is to himself or herself.	-.315
39	Reporters should set a news agenda based on the public's.	-.356
18	Reporters are too powerful to pretend they aren't.	-.473
45	Reporters should understand what it's like to be a minority.	-.497
5	Reporters should improve their participation in politics.	-.528
31	Reporters tend to present extreme positions.	-.536
27	I dislike the idea of having reporters teach everybody.	-.558
12	Reporters should bring people together to solve problems.	-.655
28	Most Americans do not see their views and interests in news.	-.693
36	Reporters too often present public life as depressing.	-.780
24	Reporters have failed to live up to their responsibilities.	-.855
6	I don't think reporters have any business getting involved.	-.953
29	I think citizen participation in public life is eroding.	-1.090
30	I believe that reporters need to change the way they work.	-1.179
17	Reporters often don't have time to gather opinions.	-1.220
46	The need to "get back to the people" trend is commercial.	-1.308
19	Freedom of the press is a conditional freedom.	-1.443
35	Reporters are responsible for making public life go well.	-2.046
20	Reporters are integral members of an elite.	-2.124

These are abbreviated statements; the complete statements appear in Appendix 2.

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APPENDIX 5: NORMALIZED FACTOR SCORES FOR INDEPENDENT EXISTENTIALISTS

No.	Statement	Z-SCORES
19	Freedom of the press is a conditional freedom.	1.771
6	I don't think reporters have any business getting involved.	1.596
39	Reporters should set a news agenda based on the public's.	1.573
35	Reporters are responsible for making public life go well.	1.560
22	The responsibility of a reporter is to himself or herself.	1.524
42	The impact of declining readership has been exaggerated.	1.144
30	I believe that reporters need to change the way they work.	.990
28	Most Americans do not see their views and interests in news.	.942
20	Reporters are integral members of an elite.	.932
47	Subsidizing and promoting events is not a job of reporters.	.917
24	Reporters have failed to live up to their responsibilities.	.874
43	It's lazy journalism when reporters rely on citizens.	.854
8	Reporters need to distance themselves from politicians.	.705
36	Reporters too often present public life as depressing.	.642
46	The need to "get back to the people" trend is commercial.	.613
4	Mobilizing support for projects is not a reporter's job.	.531
27	I dislike the idea of having reporters teach everybody.	.464
40	Reporters should cover news from the average citizen up.	.451
33	The problems with reporters today lie in their practices.	.344
12	Reporters should bring people together to solve problems.	.265
14	A reporter's responsibility isn't to fix what's wrong.	.189
31	Reporters tend to present extreme positions.	.158
44	Opinion polls are a good way to find out what people think.	.131
3	I think reporters are citizens first and journalists second.	.096
17	Reporters often don't have time to gather opinions.	.047
29	I think citizen participation in public life is eroding.	-.002
10	I think reporters should provide just factual information.	-.004
38	A new kind of news coverage is needed to refocus politics.	-.007
26	A reporter who avoids covering conflict will not succeed.	-.008
2	I feel more comfortable when reporters serve as watchdogs.	-.312
5	Reporters should improve their participation in politics.	-.351
48	Journalism teachers should teach their students leadership.	-.447
23	It's not reporters' responsibility to get people involved.	-.562
21	I believe the reporter's role is to help enrich civic life.	-.638
34	Reporters are in need of a stronger guiding philosophy.	-.653
41	Members of the audience are capable of intelligent judgment.	-.689
13	A reporter's job is not solving but revealing problems.	-.723
45	Reporters should understand what it's like to be a minority.	-.749
25	Forums, town meetings and surveys are good reporting tools.	-.808
32	Good reporters have always listened to their audience.	-.891
7	A reporter's central mission is to report and analyze.	-1.000
11	A role of reporters is to create forums for dialogue.	-1.037
15	Reporters should help audiences confront and solve issues.	-1.084
18	Reporters are too powerful to pretend they aren't.	-1.734
1	Reporters should present "windows to the world."	-1.752
9	Freedom of the press is not the property of journalists.	-1.812
16	Democracy requires shared information and discussion.	-1.851
37	Reporters' potential power carries social responsibility.	-2.197

These are abbreviated statements; the complete statements appear in Appendix 2.

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APPENDIX 6: NORMALIZED FACTOR SCORES FOR EXPERIMENTAL REFORMERS

No.	Statement	Z-SCORES
19	Freedom of the press is a conditional freedom.	2.184
39	Reporters should set a news agenda based on the public's.	1.811
30	I believe that reporters need to change the way they work.	1.737
35	Reporters are responsible for making public life go well.	1.694
24	Reporters have failed to live up to their responsibilities.	1.385
20	Reporters are integral members of an elite.	1.215
29	I think citizen participation in public life is eroding.	1.054
48	Journalism teachers should teach their students leadership.	1.017
34	Reporters are in need of a stronger guiding philosophy.	.971
12	Reporters should bring people together to solve problems.	.903
31	Reporters tend to present extreme positions.	.724
28	Most Americans do not see their views and interests in news.	.700
21	I believe the reporter's role is to help enrich civic life.	.699
38	A new kind of news coverage is needed to refocus politics.	.590
17	Reporters often don't have time to gather opinions.	.580
36	Reporters too often present public life as depressing.	.456
5	Reporters should improve their participation in politics.	.397
6	I don't think reporters have any business getting involved.	.301
44	Opinion polls are a good way to find out what people think.	.159
10	I think reporters should provide just factual information.	.159
27	I dislike the idea of having reporters teach everybody.	.147
40	Reporters should cover news from the average citizen up.	.084
33	The problems with reporters today lie in their practices.	.064
3	I think reporters are citizens first and journalists second.	.017
42	The impact of declining readership has been exaggerated.	-.013
25	Forums, town meetings and surveys are good reporting tools.	-.073
8	Reporters need to distance themselves from politicians.	-.113
22	The responsibility of a reporter is to himself or herself.	-.136
18	Reporters are too powerful to pretend they aren't.	-.148
46	The need to "get back to the people" trend is commercial.	-.279
45	Reporters should understand what it's like to be a minority.	-.335
32	Good reporters have always listened to their audience.	-.438
37	Reporters' potential power carries social responsibility.	-.453
11	A role of reporters is to create forums for dialogue.	-.617
26	A reporter who avoids covering conflict will not succeed.	-.690
15	Reporters should help audiences confront and solve issues.	-.706
43	It's lazy journalism when reporters rely on citizens.	-.731
14	A reporter's responsibility isn't to fix what's wrong.	-.852
4	Mobilizing support for projects is not a reporter's job.	-.910
2	I feel more comfortable when reporters serve as watchdogs.	-.973
7	A reporter's central mission is to report and analyze.	-1.060
1	Reporters should present "windows to the world."	-1.071
47	Subsidizing and promoting events is not a job of reporters.	-1.106
23	It's not reporters' responsibility to get people involved.	-1.203
41	Members of the audience are capable of intelligent judgment.	-1.396
9	Freedom of the press is not the property of journalists.	-1.725
13	A reporter's job is not solving but revealing problems.	-1.833
16	Democracy requires shared information and discussion.	-2.186

These are abbreviated statements; the complete statements appear in Appendix 2.

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APPENDIX 7: NORMALIZED FACTOR SCORES FOR SOLUTION FACILITATORS

No.	Statement	Z-SCORES
19	Freedom of the press is a conditional freedom.	2.244
35	Reporters are responsible for making public life go well.	1.960
12	Reporters should bring people together to solve problems.	1.386
48	Journalism teachers should teach their students leadership.	1.235
21	I believe the reporter's role is to help enrich civic life.	1.229
42	The impact of declining readership has been exaggerated.	1.037
20	Reporters are integral members of an elite.	.990
30	I believe that reporters need to change the way they work.	.958
40	Reporters should cover news from the average citizen up.	.851
3	I think reporters are citizens first and journalists second.	.717
39	Reporters should set a news agenda based on the public's.	.717
24	Reporters have failed to live up to their responsibilities.	.702
44	Opinion polls are a good way to find out what people think.	.612
15	Reporters should help audiences confront and solve issues.	.606
28	Most Americans do not see their views and interests in news.	.478
25	Forums, town meetings and surveys are good reporting tools.	.392
5	Reporters should improve their participation in politics.	.375
22	The responsibility of a reporter is to himself or herself.	.327
29	I think citizen participation in public life is eroding.	.299
8	Reporters need to distance themselves from politicians.	.298
46	The need to "get back to the people" trend is commercial.	.257
45	Reporters should understand what it's like to be a minority.	.196
17	Reporters often don't have time to gather opinions.	.192
6	I don't think reporters have any business getting involved.	.192
18	Reporters are too powerful to pretend they aren't.	.084
27	I dislike the idea of having reporters teach everybody.	.054
43	It's lazy journalism when reporters rely on citizens.	.007
32	Good reporters have always listened to their audience.	-.003
33	The problems with reporters today lie in their practices.	-.006
38	A new kind of news coverage is needed to refocus politics.	-.006
36	Reporters too often present public life as depressing.	-.047
37	Reporters' potential power carries social responsibility.	-.078
11	A role of reporters is to create forums for dialogue.	-.177
41	Members of the audience are capable of intelligent judgment.	-.234
34	Reporters are in need of a stronger guiding philosophy.	-.340
31	Reporters tend to present extreme positions.	-.371
47	Subsidizing and promoting events is not a job of reporters.	-.781
26	A reporter who avoids covering conflict will not succeed.	-1.049
4	Mobilizing support for projects is not a reporter's job.	-1.205
16	Democracy requires shared information and discussion.	-1.226
1	Reporters should present "windows to the world."	-1.294
14	A reporter's responsibility isn't to fix what's wrong.	-1.339
9	Freedom of the press is not the property of journalists.	-1.477
13	A reporter's job is not solving but revealing problems.	-1.638
23	It's not reporters' responsibility to get people involved.	-1.640
2	I feel more comfortable when reporters serve as watchdogs.	-1.658
10	I think reporters should provide just factual information.	-1.691
7	A reporter's central mission is to report and analyze.	-2.135

These are abbreviated statements; the complete statements appear in Appendix 2.

APPENDIX 8: NORMALIZED FACTOR SCORES FOR INFORMATION USERS

No.	Statement	Z-SCORES
9	Freedom of the press is not for journalists alone.	1.842
10	I think reporters should provide just factual information.	1.799
7	A reporter's central mission is to report and analyze.	1.771
34	Reporters are in need of a stronger guiding philosophy.	1.345
16	Democracy requires shared information and discussion.	1.198
14	A reporter's responsibility isn't to fix what's wrong.	1.072
23	It's not reporters' responsibility to get people involved.	1.033
37	Reporters' potential power carries social responsibility.	1.011
13	A reporter's job is not solving but revealing problems.	.991
27	I dislike the idea of having reporters teach everybody.	.980
18	Reporters are too powerful to pretend they aren't.	.848
36	Reporters too often present public life as depressing.	.831
3	I think reporters are citizens first and journalists second.	.822
32	Good reporters have always listened to their audience.	.808
5	Reporters should improve their participation in politics.	.703
8	Reporters need to distance themselves from politicians	.536
43	It's lazy journalism when reporters rely on citizens.	.512
47	Subsidizing and promoting events is not a job of reporters.	.429
4	Mobilizing support for projects is not a reporter's job.	.344
28	Most Americans do not see their views and interests in news.	.263
38	A new kind of news coverage is needed to refocus politics.	.238
29	I think citizen participation in public life is eroding.	.161
31	Reporters tend to present extreme positions.	.109
1	Reporters should present "windows to the world."	.102
46	The need to "get back to the people" trend is commercial.	.046
41	Members of the audience are capable of intelligent judgment.	-.007
44	Opinion polls are a good way to find out what people think.	-.037
25	Forums, town meetings and surveys are good reporting tools.	-.102
11	A role of reporters is to create forums for dialogue.	-.308
26	A reporter who avoids covering conflict will not succeed.	-.358
33	The problems with reporters today lie in their practices.	-.434
42	The impact of declining readership has been exaggerated.	-.443
40	Reporters should cover news from the average citizen up.	-.450
45	Reporters should understand what it's like to be a minority.	-.473
2	I feel more comfortable when reporters serve as watchdogs.	-.572
24	Reporters have failed to live up to their responsibilities.	-.696
30	I believe that reporters need to change the way they work.	-.713
15	Reporters should help audiences confront and solve issues.	-.914
22	The responsibility of a reporter is to himself or herself.	-.956
48	Journalism teachers should teach their students leadership.	-1.082
21	I believe the reporter's role is to help enrich civic life.	-1.157
17	Reporters often don't have time to gather opinions.	-1.187
12	Reporters should bring people together to solve problems.	-1.391
6	I don't think reporters have any business getting involved.	-1.452
19	Freedom of the press is a conditional freedom.	-1.717
39	Reporters should set a news agenda based on the public's.	-1.726
20	Reporters are integral members of an elite.	-1.778
35	Reporters are responsible for making public life go well.	-1.839

These are abbreviated statements; the complete statements appear in Appendix 2.

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APPENDIX 9: NORMALIZED FACTOR SCORES FOR CONSENSUS BUILDERS

No.	Statement	Z-SCORES
9	Freedom of the press is not for journalists alone.	1.906
16	Democracy requires shared information and discussion.	1.633
1	Reporters should present "windows to the world."	1.559
7	A reporter's central mission is to report and analyze.	1.486
37	Reporters' potential power carries social responsibility.	1.452
23	It's not reporters' responsibility to get people involved.	1.166
13	A reporter's job is not solving but revealing problems.	1.140
25	Forums, town meetings and surveys are good reporting tools.	1.090
34	Reporters are in need of a stronger guiding philosophy.	1.063
41	Members of the audience are capable of intelligent judgment.	1.001
36	Reporters too often present public life as depressing.	.951
31	Reporters tend to present extreme positions.	.674
15	Reporters should help audiences confront and solve issues.	.635
11	A role of reporters is to create forums for dialogue.	.615
38	A new kind of news coverage is needed to refocus politics.	.528
18	Reporters are too powerful to pretend they aren't.	.496
14	A reporter's responsibility isn't to fix what's wrong.	.473
32	Good reporters have always listened to their audience.	.357
26	A reporter who avoids covering conflict will not succeed.	.318
45	Reporters should understand what it's like to be a minority.	.275
44	Opinion polls are a good way to find out what people think.	.236
8	Reporters need to distance themselves from politicians	.185
30	I believe that reporters need to change the way they work.	.003
10	I think reporters should provide just factual information.	-.008
3	I think reporters are citizens first and journalists second.	-.017
48	Journalism teachers should teach their students leadership.	-.075
43	It's lazy journalism when reporters rely on citizens.	-.126
24	Reporters have failed to live up to their responsibilities.	-.131
5	Reporters should improve their participation in politics.	-.190
2	I feel more comfortable when reporters serve as watchdogs.	-.210
12	Reporters should bring people together to solve problems.	-.293
21	I believe the reporter's role is to help enrich civic life.	-.407
46	The need to "get back to the people" trend is commercial.	-.501
33	The problems with reporters today lie in their practices.	-.565
40	Reporters should cover news from the average citizen up.	-.578
29	I think citizen participation in public life is eroding.	-.583
22	The responsibility of a reporter is to himself or herself.	-.603
27	I dislike the idea of having reporters teach everybody.	-.744
28	Most Americans do not see their views and interests in news.	-.874
42	The impact of declining readership has been exaggerated.	-.991
17	Reporters often don't have time to gather opinions.	-1.028
39	Reporters should set a news agenda based on the public's.	-1.030
47	Subsidizing and promoting events is not a job of reporters.	-1.284
4	Mobilizing support for projects is not a reporter's job.	-1.455
19	Freedom of the press is a conditional freedom.	-1.489
20	Reporters are integral members of an elite.	-1.852
6	I don't think reporters have any business getting involved.	-1.987
35	Reporters are responsible for making public life go well.	-2.221

These are abbreviated statements; the complete statements appear in Appendix 2.

APPENDIX 10: NORMALIZED FACTOR SCORES FOR ACTIVIST REFORMERS

No.	Statement	Z-SCORES
35	Reporters are responsible for making public life go well.	2.009
6	I don't think reporters have any business getting involved.	1.810
45	Reporters should understand what it's like to be a minority.	1.535
29	I think citizen participation in public life is eroding.	1.479
19	Freedom of the press is a conditional freedom.	1.465
38	A new kind of news coverage is needed to refocus politics.	1.190
36	Reporters too often present public life as depressing.	1.131
30	I believe that reporters need to change the way they work.	1.070
20	Reporters are integral members of an elite.	.959
24	Reporters have failed to live up to their responsibilities.	.899
28	Most Americans do not see their views and interests in news.	.763
43	It's lazy journalism when reporters rely on citizens.	.694
31	Reporters tend to present extreme positions.	.627
12	Reporters should bring people together to solve problems.	.551
18	Reporters are too powerful to pretend they aren't.	.543
39	Reporters should set a news agenda based on the public's.	.447
8	Reporters need to distance themselves from politicians	.346
17	Reporters often don't have time to gather opinions.	.338
5	Reporters should improve their participation in politics.	.272
21	I believe the reporter's role is to help enrich civic life.	.248
15	Reporters should help audiences confront and solve issues.	.238
27	I dislike the idea of having reporters teach everybody.	.210
34	Reporters are in need of a stronger guiding philosophy.	.176
46	The need to "get back to the people" trend is commercial.	.156
48	Journalism teachers should teach their students leadership.	.080
47	Subsidizing and promoting events is not a job of reporters.	.034
42	The impact of declining readership has been exaggerated.	-.015
33	The problems with reporters today lie in their practices.	-.153
22	The responsibility of a reporter is to himself or herself.	-.189
4	Mobilizing support for projects is not a reporter's job.	-.298
11	A role of reporters is to create forums for dialogue.	-.334
32	Good reporters have always listened to their audience.	-.379
3	I think reporters are citizens first and journalists second.	-.398
40	Reporters should cover news from the average citizen up.	-.510
26	A reporter who avoids covering conflict will not succeed.	-.524
37	Reporters' potential power carries social responsibility.	-.671
10	I think reporters should provide just factual information.	-.698
2	I feel more comfortable when reporters serve as watchdogs.	-.769
41	Members of the audience are capable of intelligent judgment.	-.939
25	Forums, town meetings and surveys are good reporting tools.	-.997
44	Opinion polls are a good way to find out what people think.	-1.061
1	Reporters should present "windows to the world."	-1.128
14	A reporter's responsibility isn't to fix what's wrong.	-1.395
9	Freedom of the press is not for journalists alone.	-1.399
16	Democracy requires shared information and discussion.	-1.636
23	It's not reporters' responsibility to get people involved.	-1.834
13	A reporter's job is not solving but revealing problems.	-1.862
7	A reporter's central mission is to report and analyze.	-2.081

These are abbreviated statements; the complete statements appear in Appendix 2.

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APPENDIX 11: NORMALIZED FACTOR SCORES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

No.	Statement	Z-SCORES
35	Reporters are responsible for making public life go well.	1.834
21	I believe the reporter's role is to help enrich civic life.	1.560
15	Reporters should help audiences confront and solve issues.	1.446
12	Reporters should bring people together to solve problems.	1.404
22	The responsibility of a reporter is to himself or herself.	1.393
6	I don't think reporters have any business getting involved.	1.245
45	Reporters should understand what it's like to be a minority.	1.244
19	Freedom of the press is a conditional freedom.	1.193
37	Reporters' potential power carries social responsibility.	1.036
48	Journalism teachers should teach their students leadership.	1.030
39	Reporters should set a news agenda based on the public's.	1.028
42	The impact of declining readership has been exaggerated.	.947
11	A role of reporters is to create forums for dialogue.	.822
3	I think reporters are citizens first and journalists second.	.697
32	Good reporters have always listened to their audience.	.688
25	Forums, town meetings and surveys are good reporting tools.	.651
44	Opinion polls are a good way to find out what people think.	.648
18	Reporters are too powerful to pretend they aren't.	.490
17	Reporters often don't have time to gather opinions.	.434
20	Reporters are integral members of an elite.	.353
5	Reporters should improve their participation in politics.	.302
34	Reporters are in need of a stronger guiding philosophy.	.025
28	Most Americans do not see their views and interests in news.	.005
27	I dislike the idea of having reporters teach everybody.	-.075
46	The need to "get back to the people" trend is commercial.	-.087
33	The problems with reporters today lie in their practices.	-.160
8	Reporters need to distance themselves from politicians	-.253
30	I believe that reporters need to change the way they work.	-.309
24	Reporters have failed to live up to their responsibilities.	-.347
43	It's lazy journalism when reporters rely on citizens.	-.390
47	Subsidizing and promoting events is not a job of reporters.	-.444
40	Reporters should cover news from the average citizen up.	-.586
29	I think citizen participation in public life is eroding.	-.625
31	Reporters tend to present extreme positions.	-.679
26	A reporter who avoids covering conflict will not succeed.	-.702
38	A new kind of news coverage is needed to refocus politics.	-.768
36	Reporters too often present public life as depressing.	-.769
4	Mobilizing support for projects is not a reporter's job.	-.852
41	Members of the audience are capable of intelligent judgment.	-.879
14	A reporter's responsibility isn't to fix what's wrong.	-.984
16	Democracy requires shared information and discussion.	-1.062
1	Reporters should present "windows to the world."	-1.066
23	It's not reporters' responsibility to get people involved.	-1.310
13	A reporter's job is not solving but revealing problems.	-1.379
2	I feel more comfortable when reporters serve as watchdogs.	-1.407
9	Freedom of the press is not for journalists alone.	-1.547
10	I think reporters should provide just factual information.	-1.789
7	A reporter's central mission is to report and analyze.	-2.002

These are abbreviated statements; the complete statements appear in Appendix 2.

APPENDIX 12: NORMALIZED FACTOR SCORES FOR OBJECTIVE REFORMERS

No.	Statement	Z-SCORES
35	Reporters are responsible for making public life go well.	1.933
19	Freedom of the press is a conditional freedom.	1.709
6	I don't think reporters have any business getting involved.	1.455
29	I think citizen participation in public life is eroding.	1.425
20	Reporters are integral members of an elite.	1.421
24	Reporters have failed to live up to their responsibilities.	1.304
30	I believe that reporters need to change the way they work.	1.304
36	Reporters too often present public life as depressing.	1.033
12	Reporters should bring people together to solve problems.	.900
45	Reporters should understand what it's like to be a minority.	.856
38	A new kind of news coverage is needed to refocus politics.	.813
28	Most Americans do not see their views and interests in news.	.809
31	Reporters tend to present extreme positions.	.809
17	Reporters often don't have time to gather opinions.	.805
39	Reporters should set a news agenda based on the public's.	.766
5	Reporters should improve their participation in politics.	.508
18	Reporters are too powerful to pretend they aren't.	.435
48	Journalism teachers should teach their students leadership.	.375
43	It's lazy journalism when reporters rely on citizens.	.344
46	The need to "get back to the people" trend is commercial.	.323
27	I dislike the idea of having reporters teach everybody.	.297
21	I believe the reporter's role is to help enrich civic life.	.288
8	Reporters need to distance themselves from politicians.	.107
34	Reporters are in need of a stronger guiding philosophy.	.064
15	Reporters should help audiences confront and solve issues.	.030
42	The impact of declining readership has been exaggerated.	.000
22	The responsibility of a reporter is to himself or herself.	-.198
33	The problems with reporters today lie in their practices.	-.211
47	Subsidizing and promoting events is not a job of reporters.	-.271
3	I think reporters are citizens first and journalists second.	-.418
4	Mobilizing support for projects is not a reporter's job.	-.482
11	A role of reporters is to create forums for dialogue.	-.495
44	Opinion polls are a good way to find out what people think.	-.645
32	Good reporters have always listened to their audience.	-.715
37	Reporters' potential power carries social responsibility.	-.719
25	Forums, town meetings and surveys are good reporting tools.	-.736
2	I feel more comfortable when reporters serve as watchdogs.	-.796
26	A reporter who avoids covering conflict will not succeed.	-.809
40	Reporters should cover news from the average citizen up.	-.835
10	I think reporters should provide just factual information.	-.848
14	A reporter's responsibility isn't to fix what's wrong.	-1.020
1	Reporters should present "windows to the world."	-1.214
41	Members of the audience are capable of intelligent judgment.	-1.304
9	Freedom of the press is not for journalists alone.	-1.515
23	It's not reporters' responsibility to get people involved.	-1.515
16	Democracy requires shared information and discussion.	-1.606
7	A reporter's central mission is to report and analyze.	-1.842
13	A reporter's job is not solving but revealing problems.	-1.920

These are abbreviated statements; the complete statements appear in Appendix 2.

APPENDIX 13: NORMALIZED FACTOR SCORES FOR SOLUTION FINDERS

No.	Statement	No.	Z-SCORES
35	Reporters are responsible for making public life go well.	35	2.056
21	I believe the reporter's role is to help enrich civic life.	21	1.732
19	Freedom of the press is a conditional freedom.	19	1.637
12	Reporters should bring people together to solve problems.	12	1.564
48	Journalism teachers should teach their students leadership.	48	1.395
15	Reporters should help audiences confront and solve issues.	15	1.160
22	The responsibility of a reporter is to himself or herself.	22	1.079
20	Reporters are integral members of an elite.	20	1.058
39	Reporters should set a news agenda based on the public's.	39	.984
42	The impact of declining readership has been exaggerated.	42	.903
6	I don't think reporters have any business getting involved.	6	.830
45	Reporters should understand what it's like to be a minority.	45	.668
3	I think reporters are citizens first and journalists second.	3	.660
44	Opinion polls are a good way to find out what people think.	44	.492
30	I believe that reporters need to change the way they work.	30	.478
17	Reporters often don't have time to gather opinions.	17	.411
25	Forums, town meetings and surveys are good reporting tools.	25	.411
40	Reporters should cover news from the average citizen up.	40	.397
24	Reporters have failed to live up to their responsibilities.	24	.316
11	A role of reporters is to create forums for dialogue.	11	.257
28	Most Americans do not see their views and interests in news.	28	.242
5	Reporters should improve their participation in politics.	5	.168
46	The need to "get back to the people" trend is commercial.	46	.162
37	Reporters' potential power carries social responsibility.	37	.102
8	Reporters need to distance themselves from politicians.	8	.081
32	Good reporters have always listened to their audience.	32	.014
18	Reporters are too powerful to pretend they aren't.	18	.007
29	I think citizen participation in public life is eroding.	29	-.007
33	The problems with reporters today lie in their practices.	33	-.081
27	I dislike the idea of having reporters teach everybody.	27	-.243
43	It's lazy journalism when reporters rely on citizens.	43	-.250
47	Subsidizing and promoting events is not a job of reporters.	47	-.573
26	A reporter who avoids covering conflict will not succeed.	26	-.580
38	A new kind of news coverage is needed to refocus politics.	38	-.580
34	Reporters are in need of a stronger guiding philosophy.	34	-.647
31	Reporters tend to present extreme positions.	31	-.661
36	Reporters too often present public life as depressing.	36	-.661
41	Members of the audience are capable of intelligent judgment.	41	-.829
4	Mobilizing support for projects is not a reporter's job.	4	-.903
1	Reporters should present "windows to the world."	1	-.991
2	I feel more comfortable when reporters serve as watchdogs.	2	-1.159
14	A reporter's responsibility isn't to fix what's wrong.	14	-1.233
16	Democracy requires shared information and discussion.	16	-1.314
23	It's not reporters' responsibility to get people involved.	23	-1.395
13	A reporter's job is not solving but revealing problems.	13	-1.564
9	Freedom of the press is not for journalists alone.	9	-1.564
7	A reporter's central mission is to report and analyze.	7	-1.975
10	I think reporters should provide just factual information.	10	-2.056

These are abbreviated statements; the complete statements appear in Appendix 2.

APPENDIX 14: NORMALIZED FACTOR SCORES FOR INDEPENDENT PARTICIPANTS

No.	Statement	Z-SCORES
16	Democracy requires shared information and discussion.	1.953
9	Freedom of the press is not for journalists alone.	1.784
37	Reporters' potential power carries social responsibility.	1.731
1	Reporters should present "windows to the world."	1.562
7	A reporter's central mission is to report and analyze.	1.394
25	Forums, town meetings and surveys are good reporting tools.	1.172
13	A reporter's job is not solving but revealing problems.	1.003
34	Reporters are in need of a stronger guiding philosophy.	1.003
41	Members of the audience are capable of intelligent judgment.	1.003
11	A role of reporters is to create forums for dialogue.	.950
15	Reporters should help audiences confront and solve issues.	.950
18	Reporters are too powerful to pretend they aren't.	.897
23	It's not reporters' responsibility to get people involved.	.834
32	Good reporters have always listened to their audience.	.728
38	A new kind of news coverage is needed to refocus politics.	.613
45	Reporters should understand what it's like to be a minority.	.559
31	Reporters tend to present extreme positions.	.444
26	A reporter who avoids covering conflict will not succeed.	.391
44	Opinion polls are a good way to find out what people think.	.222
48	Journalism teachers should teach their students leadership.	.169
21	I believe the reporter's role is to help enrich civic life.	.115
36	Reporters too often present public life as depressing.	.106
14	A reporter's responsibility isn't to fix what's wrong.	.053
3	I think reporters are citizens first and journalists second.	.000
10	I think reporters should provide just factual information.	.000
5	Reporters should improve their participation in politics.	-.053
2	I feel more comfortable when reporters serve as watchdogs.	-.053
8	Reporters need to distance themselves from politicians.	-.337
43	It's lazy journalism when reporters rely on citizens.	-.337
12	Reporters should bring people together to solve problems.	-.391
29	I think citizen participation in public life is eroding.	-.444
30	I believe that reporters need to change the way they work.	-.506
24	Reporters have failed to live up to their responsibilities.	-.559
46	The need to "get back to the people" trend is commercial.	-.559
33	The problems with reporters today lie in their practices.	-.613
40	Reporters should cover news from the average citizen up.	-.613
27	I dislike the idea of having reporters teach everybody.	-.613
17	Reporters often don't have time to gather opinions.	-.666
4	Mobilizing support for projects is not a reporter's job.	-1.056
22	The responsibility of a reporter is to himself or herself.	-1.119
42	The impact of declining readership has been exaggerated.	-1.172
28	Most Americans do not see their views and interests in news.	-1.172
47	Subsidizing and promoting events is not a job of reporters.	-1.172
39	Reporters should set a news agenda based on the public's.	-1.340
20	Reporters are integral members of an elite.	-1.394
19	Freedom of the press is a conditional freedom.	-1.731
35	Reporters are responsible for making public life go well.	-1.784
6	I don't think reporters have any business getting involved.	-1.953

These are abbreviated statements; the complete statements appear in Appendix 2.